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PRACTICE AND PRECEPTS OF JESUS

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BY
J. C. KUMARAPPA

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A WORD
BY
M. K. GANDHI

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NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD

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G.L.65 A

A WORD

Having carefully gone through these chapters, I can recommend their perusal to every believer in God, be he a Christian or a follower of any other religion.

The booklet presents Professor J. C. Kumarappa's views on Christian teaching in a nutshell. It is a revolutionary view of Jesus as a man of God. It is none the less revealing and interesting. The interpretation of the Lord's prayer is novel and refreshing as are many other interpretations.

If all believe as Prof. Kumarappa does, there will be no religious feuds and rivalries between sects and sects and different religions. Anyway, this reading of the Bible must bring solace to the Christians of India. If they will read the Bible as Prof. Kumarappa does, they need not be apologetic of their forefathers or their ancient faith. What is bad and superstitious in the old they are able to throw off by means of the liberal teaching presented in the following pages but it helps one to see that there is much of the old which is imperishable and worthy of being treasured.

Indeed, Prof. Kumarappa has a message beyond the confines of India. He speaks

with confidence born of a living faith in the belief that the West, though nominally Christian, has not known the true Jesus of the Gospels.

As I was going through these pages, I was reminded of the late Advocate F. A. Laughton of Durban. I was then no student of Roman Dutch Law nor of the case law of the four states of South Africa. In difficulty, therefore, I used to go to Mr. Laughton for help. But, after I had done with my work, he would proudly bring forth from his drawer a green cover book with his father's annotations from the Bible. It was Edwin Arnold's "Song Celestial", and had Mr. Laughton's father's parallel passages from the Bible showing that there was much in common between the New Testment and the Gita. I was then a novice trying to find out Truth in all its aspects without then knowing that I was so doing. Prof. Kumarppa's interpretation with copious quotations from the Bible reminded me of what I used to believe even as early as 1894-5. I can, therefore, speak from experience of the truth of the interpretation of the Gospels, given in the following pages by Prof. Kumarappa.

Sevagram, M. K. GANDHI
21-3-1945

G.L.51

PREFACE

This booklet has no pretensions to being the product of a philosopher or a scholar in Christian theology. All the drilling in Christian literature I can lay claim to came in my childhood at my mother's knee and then at the Sunday School and daily family prayers.

My mother was not a learned woman in the sense of possessing a university education. She came of a devout Christian stock of South India. She had read widely for her generation, especially in Tamil. She spent her life of comparative simplicity in the practice of the tenets of Jesus. Her piety, her sympathy for and love of her neighbours she expressed by her attempt, however humble it may have been, to help those in distress. Her life and actions made an impression on my child mind much greater than many volumes of theology could have done. Her ways of inculcating religion were simple and unique.

As a child I was fond of pets. My mother encouraged me to breed poultry, turkeys, guinea fowls, etc. When she went to the market at the beginning of the month to get her monthly stores she would take me with her to buy chicken feed. During the month I would sell the eggs and keep accounts and at the

end of the month she would interest me in finding out what profit had been made. This profit had to be made over to her for being disbursed on simple charities — like the support of an orphan child at some school. Even when I was grown up and working as a Public Auditor, on the first of the month I had to send her my "tithes" out of my income. This "tithe" did not mean a mathematical one tenth but was a liberal tax calculated by the needs of her charity budget! Once when I was spending a summer holiday with her at Kodaikanal in the early twenties, on a Sunday at church the announcement was made that China was visited by a terrible famine. That day, the noon dinner was a perfect feast. We could not assign any reason for its provocation. When we inquired, mother smilingly replied, "I shall explain later." We enjoyed our nap. Then at tea time, mother called us together and told us of this famine in China and contrasted it with the sumptuous meal we ourselves had enjoyed and invited us to help in feeding the distressed in China. She brought out a subscription list with amounts set against our several names according to her conception of our respective ability to pay down the sum immediately. She had put me down for fifty rupees and took it too! Besides

such personal contributions she made us go round and collect from our friends also. She used the lever of her mother-love to goad us on. This was the home training.

As regards outside influence, in the church organization and its services I found great deviation from the teachings of Jesus. When I came to the discerning age of 16 years, at my confirmation service, in spite of all the catechism and theory we were taught, I was frankly perplexed at the "Communion service". A Bishop of the Church of England will freely partake "Communion" with his chauffeur at the "Lord's Table" but will abhor doing so with a Scotch Presbyterian Doctor of Divinity and perhaps a Chancellor of a university. While on the other hand, his Lordship, the Bishop, will be pleased to invite socially the Presbyterian Divine to his home to dinner but will not dream of sitting at the same festive board with his driver !

Again, as a student in England during the World War I, when I attended war services at St. Paul's Cathedral or at Westminster Abbey, however imposing the service may have been, I failed to reconcile the worship of a Universal Father and the Prince of Peace with tribal appeals to destroy the enemy. Nor could I understand the use of the pulpit by Bishops

and other clergy for recruiting. The blood bespattered banners of many a battle and the tombs of noted generals in these places of worship seemed a desecration. These and similar contradictions between Jesus and the Churches shook my faith in the "Christianity" of the Churches.

The life of the "Christians" both Indian and Western did little to assuage it. Indian Christians imitated the Westerners even in their mode and standard of living. While they proposed to follow the Master who had not where to lay His head, all the cross they carried was a gold one on their watch chains! I was often told it was not feasible to put the teachings of Jesus literally into practice in this 20th century. This reduced all formal religion to a farce as far as I was concerned. The term "Christian" denoted only a community with certain habits and standards of life — largely westernized and divorced from the nationsl culture of our land, priding itself on its close association with Western culture and civilization.

Up to this time I had little contact with Hindus or Muslims and knew nothing at all of their religious beliefs. (Even to this day, I must confess, I know little of these.) Then a strange set of circumstances brought me

in touch with Gandhiji. When I was requested by him to carry out an economic survey in Gujarat some of my best "Christian" friends discouraged me from helping a "heathen". However, as the life of "Christians" was not particularly elevating I did not share their repulsion for the "heathen". When I got acquainted with Gandhiji's programme of work, much on lines familiarized to me in my childhood, my eyes were opened to the practicability of the teachings of Jesus, even in this century, in our life on earth.

As the word "Christian" itself had lost all association with the life and example set by Jesus I have advisedly styled in this pamphlet all those who follow precepts such as the ones Jesus taught "Followers of Jesus", be they Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists or, perchance, even "Christians", irrespective of their own religious affiliations.

Thus, it will be seen, that the sole authority I hold for the views expressed in this booklet is provided by the life and teaching of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. I have not even drawn on the Acts or the writings of the Apostles as I feel that for the practical purposes of today we should depend more on the guidance of the Spirit of Truth to supplement the teachings of Jesus than on

the records of the application of the tenets of Jesus to conditions prevailing in Eastern Asia and Southern Europe two thousand years ago, however inspiring they may prove to be as corroborating evidence.

Besides all my other handicaps, as this was written in June 1944, in Jubbulpore Central Jail, where I spent over fifteen months of my incarceration, I had no means of access to any books other than (1) the Authorized Version of the Bible, (2) the Modern Reader's Bible by R. G. Moulton, (3) The New Testament, translated by James Moffatt and (4) the New Testament, translation by E. J. Goodspeed. Ordinarily I have quoted the Authorized Version excepting where its translation was defective; in such cases, I have indicated the other sources.

With all this background, I offer these thoughts in the hope that some wandering soul, similarly placed, may draw some help from them.

I am sure the reader will share my gratitude to Gandhiji for the heartening word of testimony drawn from his own rich experience.

27-3-1945,
Maganwadi, J. C, KUMARAPPA
Wardha, C. P.

PREFACE TO THE REPRINT

That a reprint should have been called for within six months of the publication shows that this book has had much better reception than was expected. Even orthodox Christians have welcomed it. This presumably indicates that people are thinking about their brand of Christianity which had not brought satisfaction to their souls under the stress and strain and trials and tribulation visited upon the world in the past few years.

Most of the reviews have been appreciative, just a few have been critical. To this latter group I wish to emphasise the fact that no final revelation is possible as long as man is finite. Each individual has to accept the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. There are likely to be differences in the interpretation of passages. What satisfies one may not satisfy another. This does not necessarily indicate that the interpretations or the lessons drawn are wrong. It only reveals that each person has his own approach to the Infinite. Hence no attempt need be made to answer any of the criticisms offered as this book does not claim to present the one and only

possible interpretation of the teachings of Jesus.

A sister from Tamilnad, who has translated this book into the provincial language, points out that in the Tamil Translation compared with the original Greek revised and published in 1936 by the Madras Branch of the B. and F. Bible Society, renders the Precept "You are not to resist an injury" (Matt V. 39) as "Resist not *with* evil" This makes the meaning crystal clear. It contemplates resistance but not with evil weapons or means. My thanks are due to this sister for the valuable assistance she has given.

I am grateful to Rev. J. F. Edwards of Poona for his painstaking revision of this booklet and setting right many clerical errors. The text of the book has undergone no material change,

17th January, 1946, J. C. KUMARAPPA
Maganwadi, Wardha, C. P.

TO
MY MOTHER

"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea she reacheth forth her hands to the needy",
"And let her own works praise her at the gates."

(Prov. XXXI. 20, 31)

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CANONS OF INTERPRETATION

When shorn of all Jewish theological phraseology and subjective literary gloss, the four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—form some of the most human documents setting forth the life and teachings of a Master who taught, not as a professional, but as one having authority and as one who understood all men and needed not that any should testify to Him of human nature for He knew what was in man's heart. Though heaven and earth may pass away the message of such a personality will endure for ever.

For a complete understanding of the teachings of Jesus, naturally one has to turn mainly to these four narratives. In so doing, however, as already suggested, we have to allow for the limitations of expression and language.

The English gospels are translations from the original Greek, although Jesus Himself did not use that tongue. These books were written decades after the happenings of events recorded therein. Further, in the course of transmission down to us interpolations by the manuscript makers, often repugnant to the spirit of Jesus, have crept into the texts. If we are not aiming at a literal rendering of the teachings of the Master, and if we prayfully seek to listen to His voice, nothing of these physical handicaps can stand in our way.

Personality is more eloquent than words and Jesus Himself did not intend to confine His eternal message to the words that might have passed His lips. He promised us that the spirit of Truth will lead us into all truth, as His disciples were not then ready to receive His whole message. Hence, to us words are not to be final but it is the guidance of the Spirit that should matter. Signs and miracles are not essential to bear witness to truth.

While interpreting His words we shall also grasp their significance better if the oriental setting and background are kept in mind. Unfortunately, the interpretations handed down to us through the Churches are

so mixed up with their own secular history in the West that we are often led into accepting the externals at the cost of the substance. Frequently has the spirit been made of none effect through the weather-beaten traditions of the Church. We have to shake ourselves free of these if we would see Jesus.

It is a common practice among oriental teachers and devotees to identify themselves with the Godhead. This is never understood to signify an exclusive claim to divinity. The fourth gospel depicts Jesus in this mode throughout. He Himself confers a divine sonship on all those who believe in His name (John I. 12).

In this setting the word "believe" does not connote the expression of a pious opinion nor does it signify simple credence about a state of affairs. Belief is fundamental to the very being of a person. True belief will manifest itself in action. Jesus says, "He who believes in Me will do the very deeds I do and even greater." Does our belief show itself in such a holy life or does it only result in the vain repetition of the Athanasian creed?

Again, what does "Name" signify? In this connection it stands for the principles of

the person denoted. When persons shout "Gandhijiki Jai", they do not pray merely for victory or success to the 105 lbs. of mortal flesh and blood, but for the cause Gandhiji espouses, e. g. Non-violence and Truth. Therefore, we can only be said to believe in the name of Jesus when we consecrate our very being to the ideals He stands for.

The interpretation of Jesus submitted in the following pages, therefore, is an attempt to present His teachings in the light of His personality. In so doing, if at any place it appears to transcend the written word, the above lines are humbly offered in explanation.

I

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

To appreciate fully the significance of the advent and teachings of Jesus we have to keep in mind the background against which He was working.

Jesus was born a Jew, was dedicated to God as the firstborn and brought up strictly according to the rites then known amongst the Jews as "the Law of the Lord".

The Jews were a proud nation, though then they were writhing under the political domination of the Romans. They considered themselves a people chosen by God to fulfil His purposes and as one especially favoured by Him for over two thousand years, since the days of Abraham. They looked down upon all other nations as Gentiles and considered them all as their natural enemies who were to be destroyed and to whom no courtesy or obligations were due. This approach naturally bred in them a self-centred and self-righteous attitude, narrow in outlook and patriarchal in conception.

The Lord God Almighty. Their conception of the Deity was that of a tribal god,

who ordained nature itself for their benefit, who was the Lord of Hosts to subdue their enemies, who was a jealous God visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Him. Therefore, they worshipped Him in fear and trembling and refrained even from pronouncing his name — Jehovah.

The Law. The rule of life was made known to them through Moses who laid down in minute detail the observances to be followed under every conceivable circumstance of life. This was the law the least breach of which was to be visited with severe punishment also prescribed by law.

Sin. The Jewish conception of sin was the transgression of the letter of their law "written and engraven on stones". (See also Rom. V. 13 and I John III. 4).

The Prophets. Such a rigid dispensation of this kind called for an intermediate priesthood, who, in course of time, exploited their impregnable status by laying down various ways and means of thwarting the wrath of God by sacrifices and peace offerings. This in its turn led to the formation of a complicated code of rules and regulations — the tradition of the elders — and to the rising into power of

a vested interest, a close community of lawyers, to interpret these rules. Anyone who obeyed these rules literally took pride in his self-righteousness and despised all others as "publicans and sinners". The spirit was ultimately lost in the letter.

Under such a hierarchy, life became oppressive and burdensome and people were living in constant fear of the priesthood. They served God to escape punishment and to secure personal reward. People tended to become more and more materialistic with strong worldly attachment which even to this day, in common opinion, characterizes the Jew. Even the glory of the Messiah was reduced to the conception of a wordly kingship. Life was governed by external forms and fear of consequences. The relationship between man and man became purely legalistic governed by the principle of "an eye for an eye".

This was the state of affairs when the precursor of Jesus, John the Baptist, appeared on the scene preaching, "Ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." And he was to be the last of the prophets before the regime of grace and truth was ushered in by Jesus the Christ.

II

FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I INTO THE WORLD"

1. Jesus came to fulfil the law and the prophets. (Matt. V. 17)

The Jews had mistaken the means for the end and thereby converted the camp of this world into a permanent abode, forgetting that "here have we no continuing city". Instead of developing along the divine plans laid out in the law and the prophets, they got stuck in the mud and Jesus appeared amongst them to pull them out of the rut and set their feet on the firm highway to realizing their unity with God and thus to complete the work begun by the law and the prophets and bring it to full fruition. This task Jesus conceived to be His Messianic mission.

God the Father. To begin with He had to get them out of their smug feeling of righteousness and self-complacency in following the letter of the law. He came to call the sinners to repentance (Matt. IX. 13). To do this He had to smash through their narrow fossilized ideas of a tribal god with a limited range of love and extend it to cover the

universal conception of an all-loving Father of mankind who is "Your Father and my Father, your God and my God". Thus the old terrible Lord God Almighty blooms through the revelation of Jesus into "Our Father in Heaven".

Worship. With the advent of this conception, the highly ritualistic ceremonial worship becomes out of place, and with it falls the bulwark of priesthood as now the direct relationship between God and man of a filial nature calls for no mediator. "In that day ye shall ask Me nothing. . . . Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name he will give it you . . . and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loveth you." (John XVI. 23, 26 and 27) And we are to worship God, not with sacrifices and burnt offerings, but, in spirit and in truth (John IV. 23).

Service. Up to the time of John the Baptist, the carryjng out of the law depended on an external discipline based on violence (Matt. XI. 12). Jesus substitutes for this the control of life by the inner spiritual discipline of a developed personality and the method of self-suffering in all relations between man and man.

At that time the rule of the letter of the law was in such ascendency that man himself

was regarded as secondary, and judging from the practice then obtaining, as existing for the purpose of carrying out the law. Repeatedly Jesus battled against these ceremonial observances which had become so wooden that all humanitarian and spiritual considerations were lost sight of. Again and again, He was accused of curing the sick on sabbath days and they even sought to kill Him for this because it was considered He was defying and disobeying the law as they interpreted it. (See Matt. XII. 14, Luke XIII. 14, XIV. 3 and John IX. 16). Jesus asserted the supremacy of man over administration and organization (Mark II. 27) and made it clear that it is not the act that constitutes sin but the spirit behind it and that the observance of external ceremonials was of little avail when the heart was impure (Matt. XV. 18, 19).

Apart from ceremonials, even in life, mere adherence to the letter of the law was not sufficient if the spirit underlying the commandments was absent. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked what further he should do to be saved as he had already kept all the commandments from his youth up, Jesus, knowing that he had kept to the letter of the law but that the spirit of greed and covetousness was within him still,

directed him to go and sell all he had and give to the poor. This touched the rich young man on the sore spot and it is recorded that because he had great possessions he turned away sorrowful (Matt. XIX. 16-22). Under the law such a man would have been justified —held to have led a meritorious life—but under the new dispensation he was found wanting.

When Jesus was questioned by a lawyer as to which was the great commandments in law He replied, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment .and the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. XXII. 37-40). Then we are told in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke X. 30-35) that our neighbour is one who stands in need of our help irrespective of race, creed or caste. Here Jesus cuts across the Jewish racial superiority complex. We are enjoined to worship God in love and service to our fellow-men. Unless our goodness excels that of the scribes and Pharisees we shall never enter into the Realm of Heaven (Matt. V. 20. Moffatt).

2. Jesus came to bear witness unto the Truth. (John XVIII. 37)

He Himself is the Truth and the Life (John XIV. 6)—the Prime Cause and Regulator of the universe as stated in the first four verses of the fourth gospel (Goodspeed's translation).

" In the beginning the Word existed. The Word was with God and the Word was divine.

" It was He that was with God in the beginning. Everything came into existence through Him, and apart from Him nothing came to be. It was by Him that life came into existence, and that life was the light of mankind." To know the only true God is eternal life (John XVII. 3) and the knowledge of truth will make us free (John VIII. 32)—free from the slavery of sin. Moses, representing the law, was the accuser (John V. 45). Under the law men acted in a certain way, not because it was right and proper to do so but, because it was so enjoined by law and any deviation from that course would be visited by severe punishment. Man had lost all freedom of thought and action. Robot-like he had to follow blindly the path laid out for him from the cradle to the grave. But now when the Spirit of Truth comes into our

lives and takes the helm there will no longer be any necessity to follow the-rule-of-thumb method of the law. We shall have to act according to our light and the guidance of the inner voice. We shall not be subject to an external code of laws based on force but to a sensitive conscience which will be the arbiter of an internal discipline. The law carries with it the sense of slavery to sin (John VIII. 34, Goodspeed) and engenders fear and hate, while the life of the Spirit works through love. A man will not steal, not because he fears the policeman and the punishment that will be meted out to him by law, but simply because his own conscience tells him that it is wrong to benefit through another's loss. Once we get the Spirit of truth we shall not require tomes to direct us on the right methods to pursue nor shall we need to be told by others as to what course we should take. The Spirit of Truth Himself will guide us into all truth and teach us all things (John XIV. 26), things that even Jesus had not explained to us (John XVI. 12, 13).

Unthinking obedience to external law is irksome and by no means ennobling, while the following of one's own light or conscience, even if it be through the valley of the shadow of death, is satisfying and elevating. Jesus,

therefore, calls all those that labour and are heavy laden with the burden of the life under the law — "the ministration of death" — to come to Him and find rest unto their souls for His yoke is easy and the burden light for those who accept the revelation of the Father and the gift of His Spirit and enter into "the ministration of the Spirit" ushered in through Him.

Thus does Jesus save from sin those who come to Him by delivering them from death under the reign of law and encompassing them with His love and grace. (See Rom. VI. 14, VII 6, VIII. 2, and Gal. V. 18.)

3. Jesus came that every one who believeth on Him may have eternal life, (John VI. 38,40), and become perfectly unified in the Godhead.

Jesus in prayer says, " Let them all (those who believe on Him) be one. Just as You, Father, are in union with Me and I am with You, let them be in union with Us. . . I have given them the glory that You gave me, so that they may be one just as We are. I in union with them and You with Me, so that they may be perfectly unified, and the world may recognize that You sent Me and that You love them just as You loved Me." (John VI. 21-23 Goodspeed). Eternal life is not something which we cannot enjoy while on this earth

and a state that is to be awarded only in the hereafter. It is to be possessed here and now. " I tell you, whoever believes already possesses eternal life." (John VI. 47, Goodspeed). " I tell you, whoever listens to My message and believes Him who has sent Me possesses eternal life, and will not come to judgement, but has already passed out of death into life." (John V. 24, Goodspeed). While still encased in this mortal body, the soul, by its union with the Father attains immortality. *Belief* in Him does not consist in the vain repetition of a creed. Jesus says, " He who believes in Me will do the very deeds I do and even greater." (John XIV. 12). This then is the criterion by which it shall be known whether the professed belief is sound or not. What are these deeds that Jesus did by which we shall know the genuine article ? When John the Baptist sent his disciples to know if He was the one that should come, Jesus asked them to go and tell John the things Jesus was doing : " The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. XI. 5). Only when the belief is translated into such action can the true believers look forward to hearing

the Father say: "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked and ye clothed Me; I was sick and ye visited Me; I was in prison and ye came unto Me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto Me." (Matt. XXV. 35,36,40). Thus, instead of a ceremonial worship of God in fear and trembling devoid of deeds, our devotion will have to manifest itself in a life consecrated to the living service of those in need. In such service, our physical life and natural instincts will be sublimated and we shall find true happiness in spending our talents in the relief of the distress of those around us, in a life consecrated by truth.

4. Jesus came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly. (John X. 10)

When we thus lead a life dedicated to the service of others in need, our life becomes fuller and richer. From the animal plane, where the circle of our natural family consists of a few brothers and sisters, life reaches up into the spiritual plane where our family love encompasses the millions the world over.

The material world will sink into insignificance. A man's life will not consist in the

abundance of the things he possesses (Luke XII. 15); and whosoever will try to make the best of his life of threescore years and ten for his own comfort and enjoyment will miss the real life, and whosoever will discard such selfishness and lead a life that brings light and relief into the life of others around him will gain eternal life (Matt. XVI. 25). " For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? " (Matt. XVI. 26).

Under the old dispensation, rewards were promised for good deeds done. But Jesus wants us to do our duty, not for any personal gain it may bring us, but just because it is our duty (See Matt. V. 45, 46). He says, " When you have done all you are bidden, say, we are but servants, we have only done our duty." (Luke XVII. 10, Moffatt). In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt. XX. 1-16) Jesus teaches us that neither ought we to expect commensurate rewards for our work. In the parable of the talents (Matt. XXV. 14-30) He exhorts everyone to do his utmost according to the ability vouchsafed to him by God. In so doing, whether our contribution be much or little, we shall be fully discharging our obligations. Jesus Himself finds satisfaction in

the fact that that which was to be done had been accomplished. "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His work" (John IV. 34, Moffatt). He urges us to be perfect even as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. V. 48).

The foregoing paragraphs have shown us that the advent of Jesus was to reveal the Fatherhood of God and the consequent universal brotherhood of man and thereby to confer on man the dignity of a spiritual being. He taught us to base all our relationships on love and service and He freed us from the fear of those who can only destroy the body. His life exemplified the fact that the moment we surrender ourselves unreservedly to God's will and bring the flesh under the subjection of the spirit we can become free from the bondage of legalistic relationship and can acquire the right to override man-made rules and regulations where such orders are repugnant to the Spirit of Truth. We are not to seek after results but only strive to do the will of the Father and carry out our duties without reference to any rewards. He broke through the chrysalis of the law and the prophets and took wing into the free atmosphere of Grace and Truth.

III

"BUT I SAY UNTO YOU"

In the last chapter, we considered the purpose of the advent of Jesus. In the following paragraphs we shall study some of the precepts that He enunciated while reorientating the law of Moses. Jesus lays his whole emphasis on the spirit, thought and motive behind a deed rather than on the act itself. According to His standards a man may be guilty of sin even where the act, considered a sin in law, may be wanting. His attempt is to control the source of sin in our hearts rather than be satisfied merely with the physical prevention of the deed.

The reply Jesus gave to the rich young ruler indicates to us that Jesus considered the following to be the principle commandments of Moses (Matt. XIX. 18, 19) :

1. Thou shalt do no murder.
2. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
3. Thou shalt not steal.
4. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Jesus takes up these commandments and projects them into the spiritual plane and provides us with His own version of these in the "sermon on the mount" (Matt. V. 17-48). In this chapter, our reflections will centre round the five new commandments laid down by Jesus in striking contrast to the Mosaic Law.

1. Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment (Matt. V. 22).

Anger is placed on a level with murder. Murder is the result and anger the cause, hence Jesus reaches out to the root of the evil and places it in the same category as the anti-social act itself. Judged by this standard which of us is not a murderer and a multiple murderer at that?

This code was thought to be rather too drastic and so a considerate scribe, about the 5th century, interpolated the words "without cause" after the word "brother", thus rendering it of no effect. Which of us is so mad as to be angry without a cause? Generally, are we not always in the right? If Britain goes to war with Germany on the defensive, Germany declares she also goes to the same war with Britain on the defensive! If individuals cannot even be angry how can a nation war against another and carry out large scale bloodshed,

and obtain the blessing of the High Priests of the churches on this organized murder? Hence this phrase was found most useful by the Church Militant to annex the support of the State. Thus these practical men of the world chose to gag Jesus. Modern wars also cannot be waged without the people being whipped up into a rage by a false propaganda giving "reasons" why war has been forced on the people. By the interpolation of these three words into the text, Jesus' authority also can be invoked for the large scale murders, which our modern wars are, with plausible reasons. What a brain wave to have modified Jesus' standard to the point of futility by the insertion of a few simple words! This convenient phrase I understand, is not to be found in Luther's translation, or Tischendorf's, or in any of the best of manuscripts. It is also omitted by such modern translators as Dr. R. G. Moulton and Dr. Goodspeed among others. In any case, it is most repugnant to the spirit of the Master.

Jesus would have us abandon the legalistic attitude and banish all hatred and any feeling of contempt from our very innermost thoughts. This is His sublimation of the Mosaic Law "Thou shalt do no murder" and we find its active counterpart in His injunction to love

our enemies, bless them that curse us and do good to them that hate us.

2. *Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt. V. 28).*

Here we have in a nutshell Jesus' attitude towards the primary instinct of sex and other questions of sex relationships arising out of it. The body and its requirement are to be subject to the needs of the spirit. The body represents the animal in us. If we aspire to rise above the level of brute beasts and to become sons of God we have to be born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh but of the spirit of God (John I. 12, 13). Sex is of the will of the flesh and is of nature.

In nature the male and the female come together for breeding purposes only. But the will of the flesh had made man prostitute this natural function for his own pleasure even where no progeny is desired. In doing so, man falls below the level of even the brute beasts. This view, of course, precludes all birth control by the use of contraceptives, for no man should approach a woman for the satisfaction of his lust, be she his wife or otherwise. Marriage, as a legal tie, will not modify this standard. A married man and woman may come together,

not for the satisfaction of their lust but only for the definite purpose of bearing children. Only such relationships can be that of a true Brahmachari. Hence, even a married man who looks on his wife to lust after her commits adultery with his own wife in his heart. The sin contemplated here is not of the legalistic type — breaking a social rule — but of the spirit as being a departure from God's plan. Thus it is that the principle laid down here by Jesus, since it is above the reach of man-made laws, no mere marriage licence can ever convert what is lust into anything nobler. Even the physical act is not necessary to constitute the sin, for the thought itself transgresses God's law in that it contemplates the use of the body, not in the service of God, but for one's own pleasure. This body and all its functions have been entrusted to us by God to be used to fulfil His purposes. Satisfying one's own lust is not amongst His purposes.

As a corollary to this standard of Jesus, we should expect Him to countenance marriage between a man and a woman only where true love exists and not for lust. In such marriage there can be no room for divorce. Jesus says, " What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder " (Matt. XIX, 6). Divorce is after all a legal device with which

a spiritual relationship can have nothing to do. If, however, the binding factor love is absent, the registrar's certificate by itself does not constitute marriage; since a marriage, where no love is, stands dissolved already, divorce or no divorce.

Countermanding Moses' provision in law for divorce, He says, "whosoever shall put away his wife,* besides the sin of dissoluteness, causeth her to commit adultery." In this Jesus is charging the husband with licentiousness on his own part and also as being the cause of the wife's sin, of adultery, if she marries again.

The disciples of Jesus found this Teaching so hard that they remarked "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (Matt. XIX. 10).

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* Here we may note in passing that Count Leo Tolstoy points out in his book "What I Believe", that there is an error in the rendering of the Greek for the phrase "besides the sin of dissoluteness". This is an attempt by a man-governed order to wrench the law in his favour and make divorce possible. While far from excusing the man, Jesus places on him a double responsibility, for his own licentiousness and that of his wife's marriage a second time. Luke, who is noted as a historian for his veracity and accuracy, omits this phrase altogether, so does Mark in his version. (See Luke XVI. 18 and Mark X. 11-12).

Divorce, even because of fornication, is certainly repugnant to the ideals of one who taught us to forgive at all times and always, and who said to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more" (John VIII. 11).

Divorce is purely a matter for the legal relationship and was introduced by Moses as a concession to human frailty and Jesus said this was not so from the beginning, i. e. from the inception of the institution of marriage (Matt. XIX. 8).

3. Let your communications be Yea, Yea; and Nay, Nay; for whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one (Matt. V. 37).

Under the Jewish hierarchy bearing false witness had become a menace. Jesus is here attacking this evil practice and restoring to man his dignity and integrity. Our speech, to bear the impress of truth, has to maintain the face value, neither being reinforced by oaths nor being discounted by mental reservations. We should say what we mean and mean what we say. When we attempt to embellish our speech any further we are in danger of transgressing the limits of truth. As the Persian proverb has it:

'Tell no man all thou knowest,
For he who tells all he knows,
Often tells more than he knows."

*4. You are not to resist an injury**
(Matt. V. 39).

This is in striking contrast to the ruthless, deterrent punishment provided under the Mosaic Law which says, 'If a man cause a blemish in his neighbour, so shall it be done to him again. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. And those which remain shall hear and fear and shall henceforth commit no more such evil among you.' (See Lev. XXIV. 18, 20., Deut. XIX. 20, 21). To this Jesus answers, "Resist not an injury."

It does not mean that we are passively to let all social wrongs and evils go unchecked. Jesus' sayings would be meaningless unless backed by His own example. His life was nothing if it was not a continuous pitched battle raged against the evils of the

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* Note: The translation in the Authorized Version "see that ye resist not evil" as well as Dr. R. G. Moulton's "Resist not him that is evil" do not bring out the meaning in the context. Hence I have used Dr. Moffatt's rendering which is very similar to Dr. Goodspeed's.

regime of scribes and Pharises. This injunction taken in its context and setting declares that retaliation and violence can have no place in His scheme. This commandment may be freely rendered into, "Do not hurt your neighbour even under the gravest provocation." We are to meet violence, not with violence, but with self-suffering, in a compromising and generous spirit. We are not to stand on our personal rights nor claim our dues. We are to meet the opponent with perfect goodwill unflurried by any injury done to us.

If a woman's honour is endangered the old rendering of this passage into "resist not evil" may be construed into meaning that she should meekly submit to be violated; or if one nation holds or attempts to hold another in subjection, the subject nation should not assert itself to obtain or retain its freedom. Such inference will be wholly against the spirit of Jesus. The woman will resist to the best of her ability even unto death to maintain her God-entrusted honour unsullied but there should be no intention on her part to hurt her assailant or to punish him or wreak vengeance on him. Similarly, a nation too ought to resist, non-violently, any intrusion on its God-ordained privilege of liberty. While a violent struggle will aim at injuring and, if

possible, destroying its opponent. a non-violent campaign will be directed towards preventing the opponent from doing a wrong.

It may not be out of place at this stage to note what the modern prophet of non-violence and truth—Gandhiji—has to say to guide non-violent resisters. Here are a few rules drafted by him:

> "It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-co-operation.
>
> "We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.
>
> "We may not look to him for any favours, nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.
>
> "If he wishes to take possession of our fields, we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.
>
> "If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid, we may not refuse it."

As regards the modern strategy of a 'Scorched Earth Policy" Gandhiji remarks:

> "I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or

defence. I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him. There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so, not out of fear but because I refuse to regard anyone as my enemy—that is from a humanitarian motive. There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it so that my brother, who is at war with me, may not use the water. Let us assume that I am fighting him in the orthodox manner. Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me; and sacrifice, as its root meaning implies, presupposes purity. Such destruction may be likened to cutting one's nose to spite one's face. I do claim that there are bravery and sacrifice in my leaving my wells, crops, and homestead intact; bravery in that I deliberately run the risk of the enemy feeding himself at my expense and pursuing me, and sacrifice in that the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennobles me."

This quotation from Gandhiji naturally leads us on to the next commandment of Jesus.

5. Love your enemies (Matt. V. 44).

The Jews regarded all members of their race as neighbours and all others as gentiles and natural enemies of Jehovah, their God. Hence the Jewish commandment, "Love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy." There was also the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother." Jesus extends such limited loyalties to cover all human beings.

When our life is sublimated by the spirit of Truth, and our love encompasses the whole world, then humanity, as the creation of our Father in Heaven, constitutes our family circle. Black or white, brown, yellow or red, all are our brethren and we can have no enmity within this family. All personal relationships should be based on love though we may hate certain evil deeds, systems and organizations and fight against these and try to exterminate them. As regards individuals we have to do good to them that hate us, and pray for those that despitefully use us and persecute us.

These high ideals and precepts could have been brushed aside as impracticable had not Jesus Himself set us an example by His life as to how to practise these. He healed the ear of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest, when he came to arrest Him. When

He was spat upon and smitten He did not resist the injury. On the Cross He prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him.

When our life is guided by such high ideals as stars, is it possible for us to find fault with our neighbour? We shall feel too humiliated at our own shortcomings to sit in judgment over others. The beam in our eyes will shut our vision from noticing the mote in our neighbour's eye. Like the publican, we shall not dare even to raise our eyes to heaven but shall beat out breasts and say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke XVIII. 13).

These precepts, however lofty they may be, do not determine, once and for all, the shores of the spiritual ocean. Those who hold that Jesus gave the final and a complete revelation and that there is no further scope for further developments, do Him a grave injustice, unknowingly though it may be. Great masters are limited by the capacity of their pupils. Such masters can only lay down broad principles along the lines of which further experiments may be made to explore deeper into truth. The function of the master is not merely to bequeath a store of knowledge to his pupils but to instil in them a thirst for truth and inspiration, and drill them in proper

methods of research. Thenceforward the pupils should go full speed ahead on their own steam. Does the quantitative knowledge in physics stop where Newton left it ? Do our modern physicists sit and watch apples fall? Has not Einstein opened up newer fields ? The great contribution of the late Acharya P. C. Ray was not so much in his own researches, great as they have been, but rather in the creation of a band of able scientists to carry on his tradition. No less can Jesus' claims be. At the time of His advent the Jews were a narrow-minded race obsessed with a racial superiority—like that of the Nazis over the Jews—and they inherited a most violent tradition. Even the few disciples He had were mostly a group of fisherfolk, for the most part practically unlettered. Within His ministry of hardly three years to have taught them what He did was one of His greatest miracles, and the ideals and principles He set forth were in themselves revolutionary. Is it to be wondered then that He found that His disciples could not take in and digest all He had to say and that He had to leave them with a promise that when they got the Spirit of Truth more things would be revealed to them. His revelation was therefore, partial, being naturally limited by the capacity of His disciples. (See John XVI

12, 13). How then can we claim finality for His revelation?

If Jesus' promise is to find fulfilment, those who profess to follow Him ought to find new facets of truth opened to them as they advance on the route indicated by their Master. Unfortunately, man is so constituted that if he does not progress he does not merely stagnate but deteriorates. To justify the trust and responsibility reposed in him, man has to make use of his talents. That is the condition of all advance. In the parable of the talents the servant who buried his talent in the earth hoping to preserve it is condemned (Matt. XXV. 24, 30). The Churches which claim finality for Jesus' revelation are in this position. The tragedy of it all is the Churches usurped the place of the Spirit of Truth and professed authority to lay down the way of life for all. Anything new from any other source was considered heretic and was suppressed with all the violence human ingenuity could devise. The results have been a terrible backsliding from the standards of Jesus. As proof, behold the battlefields of Europe.

The two mighty and doughty champions of the Church—the Britain of Wesley and the Germany of Luther—are locked in the most deadly, violent and bloody struggle in the

history of mankind. What place is left for the precepts of Jesus — not to be angry and not to resist an injury, not to mention "Love your enemies"? This is the achievement of the Church two thousand years after the advent of the Prince of Peace! We were then taught to regard the whole world as one family of our common Father in heaven. Today, Nazi Germany has more racial arrogance than the Jews of old.

This retrogression is due to regarding Jesus' revelation as final. The road to progress was blocked. The Churches had usurped the place of the Spirit of Truth but had fallen far short of the great responsibility undertaken by them by claiming to be the sole arbiter and interpreter of the Master. Jesus taught us to have direct relationship with God (Matt. VI. 6, John XVI. 26, 27), and finally attain eternal life by union with the Father (John VI. 21-23, Goodspeed). But the Churches have interposed themselves between man and God with such incompetence followed by such dire results as we witness on the battlefields of Europe. Even noble science has been pressed into the service of Moloch and prostituted into inventing diabolical weapons of destruction. God endowed us with talents to serve and glorify Him. Are the battlefields of Europe a glory

to God? Where is goodwill among men to be found? Revenge, avarice and hatred have the day. What are the Churches doing to undo the mischief brought about by their failure? They are holding up their holy hands on either side of the fighting lines, praying to the Father of mankind to help them to devise more and more deadly ways and means of destroying His children on the opposite side. May God open our eyes to realize the degradation and blasphemy of the situation and retrieve the position before it is too late. Sodom and Gomorrah are as candle smoke before the sulphurous fumes belching forth from London and Berlin. If Jesus, who wept over Jerusalem, were amongst us in flesh and blood, would not He, who said, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach man so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. V. 19), also lament with a bleeding heart, "O Europe, O Europe, ye that suppress meek and mild nations and live on their lifeblood, ye that controvert and distort My teachings and thereby exploit the ignorant, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her

wings, and ye would not! Behold, your countries are left unto you desolate."

Jesus was no static force. His was a dynamic personality. Growth is its essence. We may be legitimately asked how then can we supplement or extend the application of the precepts laid down by Jesus? We shall consider such new spheres in a later chapter. Here we shall be content to cite but one instance. Jesus extended the Jewish love for their own nation and made it to apply to the whole world of human beings. Buddha had extended his love to cover not merely human beings but all sentient creatures, and following him the Jains even extended it to all things having life including even roots. Surely the Spirit of Jesus can take in such applications. But flesh-eating, even at the risk of offending our neighbours—Muslims by pork and Hindus by beef—is still the hall mark of Christendom! Do we not come under Jesus' condemnation of having a millstone hanged about our neck and being cast into the sea? Is not life more than meat? We are enjoined to let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

IV

" AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY YE "

Prayer forms or provides the binding factor between God and man. It is the medium by which man establishes union with God. Therefore, one who wishes to do the will of the Father has always to pray. Indeed such a person's life itself should be one continuous prayer — prayer in thought, word and deed to escape all those things Jesus warned us against when He said, " Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray always" (Luke XXI. 34,36). Through prayer, it is that man remains in communion with God and derives his strength. It is the conductor connecting the live wire charged with electrical energy that drives the powerful engine and the railway train or the street tram car; these remain but masses of dead metal until the connection is established.

Unfortunately, the English word "prayer" does not connote all this but carries a strong sense of request or begging and so supplication for our wants has largely coloured the forms

of prayers offered in churches. True prayer should have meditation as the base and full and free communion with God as the means of obtaining the needed power from on High. Such supplication as there may be will be for the better fulfilment of His purposes focussing sharply our intense desire for service.

The method of praying that Jesus taught His disciples is a perfect model which we ought to follow closely. As in many other respects the churches have stuck to the letter and have missed the spirit of what has been misnamed "The Lord's Prayer". This lays down merely the general outlines on which prayer has to be made, and it forms more or less a beautifully put together concise table of contents. In effect, it is a gnome of the whole of the philosophy of Jesus. It is as absurd and puerile to repeat these words as being a complete prayer in itself as it would be to enumerate the names of the books of the Bible beginning from Genesis through Malachi and Matthew right down to Revelation and then be satisfied as though you had gone through all the contents of those books from cover to cover. The High Churches have even gone to the limit of setting these lines to music and chanting them by the Priest giving the lead, intoning loudly, "Our Father" and then the congregation following and keeping

time with the organ ! All this in spite of instruction laid down by Jesus just before this formula was enunciated directing us:

1. Not to pray so as to be seen of men.

2. But in a private chamber with the doors shut.

3. Not to use vain repetitions.

4. Not to beg for personal needs, "for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him."

" The Lords Prayer " (Matt. VI. 9-13) consists of seven stages or chapters and we shall study them in their order. The first is devoted to the contemplation of the Infinite as Creator and Sustainer; the second to His ways and to eternal principles and Truth; the third is concerned with personal self-surrender to God's will, which is followed by a meditation on the consequences of a consecrated life as manifested in deeds; and the last three supplications are for strength, purity and steadfastness of purpose, respectively. Each stage is pregnant with meaning and is capable of being developed into volumes of philosophy which is much beyond our scope. We shall content ourselves with a simple indication of the possibilities.

1. Our Father which art in heaven.

This opening thesis is one of the great purposes of Jesus' mission on earth which we considered in the second chapter. If He came to reveal the Fatherhood of God the Creator He came also to establish the consequent brotherhood of mankind and mould the human race into one family, though drawing the members from different "folds" (John X. 16) building up a single fold under one Shepherd, the Sustainer.

Contemplation on this field throws up many challenging questions to our generation. If there be but one Father, is not humanity in the position of a joint family wherein there should be equality among all the brothers and sisters composing it and who should live in complete amity? Does it behove us to carry on fratricidal wars for any reason, economic or otherwise? Should not all the members pool the resources for the common good? Under the existing state of affairs is it not tantamount to blasphemy to address God as "Father"?

Let us consider the circumstances under which we shall be entitled to this filial relationship. Jesus Himself has laid down most of these conditions, of which naturally the foremost is an all-embracing love.

> (a) " Love your enemies, bless them that curse you and do good to them that hate you . . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. V. 44, 45).

And here is the charter of our rights :

> (b) "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John I. 12).

We have already noticed in the 3rd section of the 2nd chapter what implications "belief" carries. What connotation the word " name " bears in this connection will be seen in the next thesis of this " prayer ".

Then follows the duty to be performed :

> (c) "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister and mother " (Matt. XII. 50).

As we have seen previously, God's will is that we should rise from the animal plane to the realm of the Spirit and be unified in Him, doing the works that Jesus did and even greater.

By such means we shall attain the characteristic that should declare the quality of our sonship as visualized in the following :

(d) "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. V. 48).

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke VI. 36).

And then, at last we achieve the final goal or destination of all children of God when we attain immortality in the Infinite.

(e) "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." (John XVII. 21).

If we acclaim the prime cause of creation as our "Father" what should be our relationship to our other fellow-creatures commonly called the lower orders — animals, birds etc. — which also owe their existence to the same Father ? Will not devouring these constitute fratricide and a kind of cannibalism ?

2. Hallowed be Thy name.

God is Love, God is Truth. May we hold in reverence the eternal principles and practice these bring to our mind His name as manifested in the life of Jesus and all it signifies (John XVII. 6) — such as teachings, preaching and doctrines (Acts V. 28. 42). We have considered some of His precepts in chapter III. Holding these "sacred" does not mean

locking them up in a golden ark enshrined in a noble church or other edifice, much less repeating the words in season and out of season, but taking them to heart and consecrating our lives for the fulfilment of these in our deeds.

> " Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." (John XV. 8).
>
> " That they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. V. 16).

Is our life a credit to Jesus? Do those around us thank God for our presence amongst them?

3. The kingdom come.

What sort of a kingdom is this? Where is it to be? and what are its chief features?

The then prevalent Jewish idea was that when the Messiah came he would reign on earth as a temporal monarch, holding sway over all other kings of the earth. Jesus refers to this conception in His talks with the Jews (Matt. VIII. 11, 12 and XXI. 13) but states that His kingdom is not of this world (John XVIII. 36) and promises to give His followers a kingdom of His conception (Luke XII. 32 and XXII. 59) and points out that the kingdom of God is located neither here nor there but

that it is "within you" (Luke XVII. 21) and He urges them to work with a singleness of purpose towards bringing it about (Matt. VI. 33).

Jesus shows up the fundamental differences between this kingdom and the earthly ones:

(a) The ordinary attribute of royalty is power to lord it over others, but the kingdom of God is known by the spirit of service that pervades it (Luke XXII. 25-27). Jesus Himself came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. XX. 28).

(b) Earthly royalty is nothing without wealth and splendour. Jesus warns us that life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which one possesseth (Luke XII. 15). He directs those that seek the kingdom of God to sell all they possess and distribute it to those who need and thus transfer their worldly wealth into heavenly treasure, for where the treasure is there will the heart be also (Luke XII. 33. 34). The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the King in this kingdom hath not where to lay His head (Matt. VIII. 20).

(c) What attraction will there be in a life in a royal place that has no pomp and pride! Jesus would have us practise

humility as a characteristic of His kingdom (Matt. XXIII. 11, 12, Mark IX. 34, 35). He, the Master, sets the example by washing His disciples' feet (John XIII.14).

When we pray "Thy kingdom come" are we ready to open wide the doors of our hearts to let such a King to dominate in His kingdom within us and reign over a life of service characterized by simplicity and humility? Are we prepared to dedicate all our talents and faculties loyally for the fulfilment of His purposes and spend and be spent in carrying out His will?

4. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Like the previous section this too means submission to God's will on the part of the one who prays. The previous one is for a personal surrender, while this craves to have such a consecrated life transformed actively into deeds. Jesus' life declares to us God's will. We should love our fellow-men and such love should manifest itself in the service of the needy (Matt. XXV. 35, 36). God has no other agents on earth but ourselves to carry out His will, so if we intensely desire that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven, it is up to us to fall in line with God's ways and

execute them. In heaven, there is no departure from His will, but on earth, man's selfishness and perversity interfere with the even progress planned by God and form a destructive deviation from the eternal law and order. This is sin. We can help to eradicate these evils by surrendering ourselves wholly to His will by a discipline from within us guided by the Spirit of Truth.

When God's will is done on earth there can be no injustice, social, economic or political. Wherever there is such injustice, our place and function are indicated. We have to lose our bodies to gain our souls. Where God's will prevails can there be:

1. Social inequalities, high and low, prince and peasant, colour and race?

2. Economic differences of rich and poor, the exploiter and the exploited, owner, labourer and slave? Famines, pestilence and oppression?

3. Traffic in goods harmful to the body such as narcotics and strong drink?

4. One nation lording it over another —imperialism?

5. Nations warring against nations?

What are we doing to abolish these? If our desire, that God's will should be done on earth, is intense and is not merely a pious

wish expressed in vain words, we cannot rest until all these departures from His will are put right. To this end we should be prepared to offer ourselves as complete living sacrifices on these altars. Under such circumstances it is not possible to create water-tight compartments within which "religion" has no jurisdiction, nor can there be reserved portfolios for churches, hospitals, schools and asylums. No religion is worth our allegiance if it does not comprehend all life and the the whole of it, from the cradle to the grave. Where God's will is the sole objective there can be no such separate organization as religion having its being within well demarcated boundary lines. God pervades the universe and all that is within it. So does His will. Hence our efforts to bring God's will on earth has, of necessity, to be equally expansive as its field of activity.

Jesus' very existence was to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work (John IV. 34). Should not we also be such ambassadors of God? Then alone can God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

At the gates of Heaven,
There will be no question
As to thy race, wealth or birth.
But just "what hadst thou done on earth?"
(Arabian saying).

5. Give us to-day our bread for the morrow (Moffatt).

Before we proceed to contemplate this supplication there are one or two explanations to be made in regard to the words used in the Authorized Version " Give us this day our daily bread ". Immediately before formulating this " Prayer " Jesus instructed His disciples not to burden their prayers with unnecessary words, " for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him "; and again a little later after pointing out the futility of seeking to satisfy bodily needs, He says " therefore take no thought saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or where-with shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.) For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the king-dom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." (Matt. VI. 31-34). In the light of these teachings it would be absurd for Him to teach his disciples to pray for their bodily needs. These words are obviously a mistranslation. Dr. Moffatt renders this, " Give us today our bread for the morrow." Here again the word

"morrow" would be better substituted by "the coming day". With the Jews, "the coming day" was used to signify—the day of the Lord (See Jer. XXIII. 5, XXXI.31 etc.), i. e., the life to come; and hence, by contrast "this day" would mean "this life". Then with these changes the sentence would read, "Give us in this life the bread of the life to come."

Once more, with the context, the word "bread" cannot signify food for this mortal shell we live in. Jesus Himself quotes, "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This word then refers to "the word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"—the bread of life in the same sense in which Jesus says, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." (John VI. 32, 33). Hence a liberal translation would read, "May we realize in this life the ideals and conceptions we associate with the life to come", meaning we crave for the spiritual strength needed to sustain us in leading the life abundant we obtain through Jesus.

Jesus, in explaining His mission to His unsophisticated disciples, often uses words applicable to this mortal body and its functions

to signify things of the spirit. Thus, He says, "I am that bread of life." "This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." (John VI. 48, 50, 51 and 55). He told the Samaritan woman, "whoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John IV. 13, 14). Then again He states, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thrist." (John VI. 35). After this he goes on to explain what He means. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from heaven; . . . he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." (John VI. 56-58). Jesus repeated this idea at "the last supper"

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also. The food we take, when fully digested, gets assimilated through the blood into our system and thenceforward becomes part of the body, indistinguishable and inseparable from it. So also when we perceive fully Jesus' teachings and His precepts and have assimilated the ideals—the bread of life—set forth by Him, we shall be so spiritually developed as to follow Him completely surrendering ourselves to God's will. We shall thus ultimately lose our separate identity and become merged in the Father. (See John XVII. 21, 23 and 26).

This teaching of Jesus of a complete union with the Father is being caricatured still by the churches in their "Communion Service" where, in literal accordance with Jesus' words, bread and wine are being distributed; and, indeed, in some of the orthodox churches they actually go to the full extent of professing under their "doctrine of transubstantiation" that the eucharistic elements of bread and wine, after being blessed by the priest, are transformed into the real body and blood of the Christ. What a perversion of the original figure of speech, and what a gruesome and almost cannibalistic rite to be performed in the name of Love and Truth! The spiritual significance of accepting Jesus' standards and

His Spirit of Truth and leading such a selfless life as to be eventually unified with God is totally lost sight of.

Jesus spent a period of preparation in the wilderness, fasting and praying, before starting on His ministry and it is recorded that angels ministered unto Him (Matt. IV. 11.) and after that He returned in the power of the Spirit to start his work (Luke IV. 14). This was a special time when He lived on such nourishment from on High and became united with the Father. He states, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled" (Matt. V. 6).

Is our seeking of the kingdom of God and His righteousness eager enough to secure for us the blessing of being filled with the Spirit of Truth and being given strength for our work? Are we leading a life so completely merged with God and His plan and work that our physical existence is of little avail to us? Do we so fully identify ourselves with the Father?

*6. Forgive **us** our debts, as we ourselves have forgiven our debtors.*

This section deals with an intense and honest searching of our own innermost self to see how and where we have fallen short of

the moral standards set by Jesus. By such constant examination and vigilance we have to direct our steps towards perfection under the ever helpful Spirit of Truth.

When we measure ourselves against these new standards of Jesus, as we have already seen, our sense of personal sin will be so intense that we shall have no heart to sit in judgment over others. If we have been angry with someone, thus being ourselves guilty of murder, how can we condemn a simple brother who has taken the life of another in a fit of rage? If we, in our innermost hearts harbour covetous feelings against the property, wealth or status of another, and thus are guilty of stealing, how can we point the finger of scorn at one who has picked another's pocket to appease his hunger? The clearer our spiritual vision, the greater is the need for a contrite heart. When we realize our greater short-comings in view of our superior development and standards, we shall see that we have no right to be angry or vindictive. We shall have to humble ourselves before God and be forgiving. This should not slacken our course to suit ourselves. Jesus Himself set us an example by praying for the forgiveness of those who spitefully used Him and crucified Him.

7. *Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.*

In the previous section, we looked back on our life to take stock of our past deeds and to know where we have been found wanting: and in this section, conscious of our failings and weaknesses, we have to guard ourselves about the future. There is need for us to mount the watchtower and survey the path that lies ahead of us. Jesus warns us ever to watch and pray as the danger of stumbling is always present. Life is made up of small decisions from moment to moment. Unless our vigil is constant the animal nature within us will lead us astray on the downward path. " The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." At each step we need to have our eyes on the lodestar. Jesus is our light. He says, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John VIII. 12). " But he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth " (John XII. 35).

In the following chapter, we shall study in some detail the great temptations that confront us in this life.

V

"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN"

Man is endowed with a free will. The course he wishes to take in accordance with the exercise of his free will to gratify the wants of the animal part of his make-up may deviate from the line laid down by his Creator for the well-being of his spiritual side. This conflict between following the dictates of his will and obeying or submitting to God's higher purposes constitutes the temptations of life. We can be delivered from temptations only when our free will has been trained and disciplined into perfect alignment with the will of the Father.

The three recorded temptations (Matt. IV. 1-11) came to Jesus after His period of preparation in the wilderness and when He was about to start on His public work. Such temptations were not peculiar to Jesus but confront each one of us when we are faced with the choice of methods we should take in the little parts we may have to play on this stage of life's drama. Every boy and girl, and man and woman has, therefore, to study carefully how Jesus Himself met His own life problems.

1. That stones be made bread.

After the fast of forty days when Jesus was famished for nourishment, the tempter came to him and said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Jesus replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. IV. 2-4).

The rounded brown stones in river beds and ravines are suggestive of fermented home-baked bread. Hence, Jesus again uses this simile when he asks, if a child wants bread will any father give it a stone? (Matt. VII. 9). When looked at superficially, such stones present the semblance of that which satisfies a great physical need, but on closer examination it would be realized that the outward appearance is deceptive and a pure illusion as these stones are perfectly useless to sustain real life — life that matters.

Many a young person, when he chooses a career, is tempted to follow a course of action which appears to be satisfying because of its material value as a means of earning money. Is our life to be content with mere material well being? Are we to exploit the resources of the earth for our own personal material wealth? A merchant carrying on business on a profit motive regardless of any

other consideration, a medical man running his dispensary for the income it brings him, a scientist working on his researches for the successful patents he is able to sell to manufacturers, a lawyer arguing his cases for the fees he can command, a preacher or a priest or a teacher pursuing his avocation for the pay that will meet his living expenses, an engineer or a Government servant working for the salary he is given irrespective of any ideals, all these in their several walks of life are converting stones into bread every day of their lives. They are utilizing the God-given faculties to obtain things that do not satisfy. Such persons, living on the animal plane, content with the supply of primary bodily needs of their own and with physical comforts and luxuries, not looking beyond the horizon of their domestic circles, succumb to this temptation. Their material wants are satisfied. They have a good home, a car, a radio, a club and a congenial circle of friends similarly circumstanced. This then is their world and the end of their being. Their daily prayer is:

God bless me and my wife,
My son John and his wife,
Us four,
And no more.

Such an existence is narrow, self-centred

and is based on the gratification of the animal senses—the aim in life being the abundance of the things one can possess. Jesus speaks of such people in the parable of the rich fool (Luke XII. 16-21), who pulls down his inadequate barns and builds larger ones, stores all his rich harvest of grains and fruits and says to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God says to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Such are they that lay up treasure for themselves but are not rich toward God. We have to realize that this earthly life is but a camp—fleeting and transient—we cannot establish a home here. Even Peter was tempted by the temporary ecstasy of the moment into wishing that the passing experience be made more permanent while on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. XVII. 4).

Do we put our trust in worldly things? We are told, "Man shall not live by bread alone." Is the satisfaction that wealth brings everything that matters in life? Should we live and die like well-provided pet dogs?

This is the temptation that confronted Jesus also. Should He convert His divine powers

to meet His pressing personal need of the moment—hunger, and use them for Himself? He scornfully turns away from such a course and finds His food and satisfaction in doing the will of God and finishing His work (John IV. 34). Shall our choice fall differently? Shall we serve mammon and sell our birth right for a mess of pottage and just live to eat, drink and be merry? Shall we labour for that which perisheth but not for that which endureth to everlasting life? (John VI. 27). Shall we reject the bread of life that cometh down from heaven for the rounded stones of the ravines? Shall we not rather provide ourselves with bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth? (Luke XII. 33). May God grant us strength to make our aim the kingdom of God and His righteousness and then all these things will be added unto us.

2. To jump from the pinnacle and yet be unhurt.

"Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down;' for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in their hands they shall

bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash thy foot against a stone."

This second temptation is one of a slightly higher order. The first one ended with physical satisfaction on the animal plane. This one deals with a mental gratification of being able to exercise with considerable skill certain of the faculties we are endowed with. A Ford may gloat over the excellent performance of a car he has manufactured, a physician may be proud of the cures he effects, a scientist may be pleased with his discoveries into the mysteries of nature, a lawyer may boast of his forensic skill which enables him to get his guilty client scotfree, a preacher may be happy over his oratory, an engineer may exult over his ability to harness nature and her formidable forces, and the Government servant may feel gratified with his efficiency.

These are all good in their places but they do not reach far enough. They do rise above the animal plane of the former temptation to the human plane of satisfaction derived from the proper and full use of our faculties. We may work, not for filthy lucre, but for name and fame. Yet we shall fall short of the goal God has set for us.

What then shall we do with our lives? If we do not want to cash in our faculties

for worldly gains, neither are we to exchange them for the pleasure of work well done and mental satisfaction?

Jesus gave the answer to this eternal question, that turns up before every one, to the rich young ruler, who felt he had led a spotless life from his youth up, following every detailed requirement of the Mosaic Law, when He said to him, "One thing thou lackest, go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me" (Mark X. 21). Jesus took in at a glance the self-complacency of the young man and knew that his life had been a stagnant pool which had not reached out to succour those around him. He, therefore, suggested to him expanding his life so as to encompass within the range of his ambit those in need. We have to devote all the talents vouchsafed to us, not merely to the achievement of success, but, to the service of those in need without the expectation of any return to ourselves. Jesus directs us to give our inmost life as charity (Luke XI.41). Nothing short of consecrating our whole life will meet His demand. We can neither hold anything back for ourselves nor even take credit for whatever we may be able to accomplish. When

we have done everything He bids us do, we are to feel that we have been but unworthy servants who have only carried out their mere duty (Luke XVII. 10). Can we resist our vainglorious nature ? Are our actions motivated by what others think of us and the desire to gain respect in the eyes of the world? Science, art, emotional pleasures, etc., are not to be our goal in themselves. We are not to regard man and his faculties as an isolated end but as parts of the eternal dispensation of God in which no mutations can take place. Let us, then render unto God the things that are God's.

3. The glory of the Kingdoms of the earth.

The devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and says to Him, "All these things will I give thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." Jesus answers, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

At the threshold of His ministry, Jesus was, naturally contemplating His method of operation. The Jews of his time were eagerly seeking for the signs of their Messianic kingdom. In the previous temptation He considered the way open to him of placating the Jewish

desire by performing miraculous signs and thus drawing them to Himself. He rejected that course of action. Then comes up this alternative of establishing a temporal sway over his people, banishing and displacing the domination of the Romans. Neither does this means of approach to the fulfilment of His mission appeal to Him. He decided to serve God and Him only.

The former two temptations concern man as an individual. But he soon outgrows that stage and realizes that he is one of a group. In the first, he seeks to live within his skin, as any animal does. In the second, his ambit is widened to the extent of his mind and his faculties. In this third, the whole human family is brought within his range.

Now, man is seized with the ambition of holding others in his power and controlling and shaping their lives as he deems fit. Here we are faced with our social consciousness leading us into temptation.

Such power over others may be obtained by pure brute force, by financial intrigues or by political strategy. Alexander wanted to conquer the world. Japan wants to overrun and 'develop' China. Mussolini was obsessed with the idea of "civilizing" Abyssinia. New York penetrates the Latin American

Republics with loans and securities. Hitler holds Germany in the hollow of his hand by the Nazi social organization. We may not all aspire to such world-wide powers. We may but play to the gallery for popular applause, or we may aim at controlling a school committee, or the parish council, or dominating the village panchayat or the District Board or even swaying the provincial legislatures. Whatever it be, what is the motive that should provide the urge? Personal aggrandizement or selfless service? God alone knows our innermost hearts. Let us not pretend to be what we are not. This is a most subtle temptation. Even Jesus' disciples, James and John fell into this temptation when they sought to sit on the right and left of Jesus in His glory (Mark X. 37). The danger is great. We may not seek material advancement nor even personal gratification but just the glow of the adoration of our neighbours and the exercise of patronage. Whatever the motive be, in each case we shall have our reward, such as we seek, but no more.

But the choice of Jesus was to worship God and serve Him alone regardless of whatever by-product such service might bring in its trail. We may be, as it rarely happens, crowned with unsought for glory, with even

wealth and satisfaction added to it, but it may also land us, and in most cases it does, in a conflict with powers that be. Doing his duty cost John the Baptist his head. Jesus had not where to lay His head, and He was hounded out and hunted by the scribes and Pharisees and, finally, He gave His life on the Cross.

Jesus makes no promise to us of a cushy time if we decide to follow Him. On the contrary, He offers His Cross. He adds, "Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." (John XVI. 2). " Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. V. 11, 12).

Shall we shoulder the Cross and follow Him and be glad over the crown of thorns that awaits us and rejoice that we have been counted worthy to suffer for the cause? If we surrender ourselves to Him He will grant us the strength to banish Satan from our lives.

In the chapter following, we shall survey the strait gate and the narrow way open to the few who will thus follow Jesus.

VI

"BEHOLD, I SEND YOU FORTH"

It was never Jesus' ambition to found a new religion. He said He was sent but to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt. XV. 24). That is, He considered His duty to be that of a reformer who would purge Judaism of its malpractices and its excrescences and bring it back on to the lines God had laid out for it; not even to strengthen its numbers by conversion. He denounced, in no uncertain terms, the eagerness of the scribes and Pharisees who encompassed land and sea to make one proselyte (Matt. XXIII. 15). His instruction to His disciples also was definitely "not to go into the way of the Gentiles nor enter into any city of the Samaritans" but to confine their work to Israel (Matt. X. 5).

To fulfil the task He set before Himself, He relentlessly fought all restrictive provisions that cramp man's free growth and full development into a son of God ultimately merging into the Father. He concedes that religion is good only in so far as it is a help to man to attain his goal.

He requires helpers who will sanctify and dedicate themselves to this cause and continue the work He has started. He is fully

aware that a large number of persons will not be able to follow Him through the strait gate into the narrow way, because of hardships, but who will prefer the broad way to destruction paved with pleasures (Matt. VII. 13). The call may come to many, but the chosen will be a few only (Matt. XX. 16 and XXII. 14). He himself left behind only eleven disciples of an inner circle, and sent out seventy of a wider range during His lifetime. Therefore, it will be futile to expect whole nations to be " Christian " until the Millennium comes. The Churches have attempted to " convert " every one to join their own special brand of " religion " with the result that they have had to let down the barriers to widen the narrow path indicated and trodden by Jesus. This building of a broad highway has gone to such limits as to grant dispensations to compromise or to throw overboard principles Jesus held to as fundamental. This same process has watered down the teachings of Jesus to suit the needs of the majority.

In this chapter, we shall restrict ourselves to the ideals Jesus held up to those few who were willing to leave all, take up the Cross and follow Him.

Terms of Service. A palace equipped comfortably, with sumptuous appointments and

many servants, together with a princely allowance is not what Jesus offers His workes. His conditions have been very definitely laid down: " Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his food. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go hence " (Matt. X. 9-11). In effect, the insignia of His worker is not a golden Cross elaborately embroidered on an ermined robe, but the simple beggar's bowl. They are not to accept entertainment as guests from house to house but are to eat whatever is set before them (Luke X. 7-8). Hospitality, given or received, is good but it absorbs attention which may be better devoted to more elevating occupations. While chiding Martha for worrying about entertaining her guests, Jesus commends her sister, Mary, who left the house work and sat at His feet listening to His discourse, as having chosen the good part that will not be taken away from her (Luke X. 42).

A high standard of living may not be an evil in itself but its allurements are dangerous. Even a stalwart like Peter was led into denying his Master by seeking, on a cold night, warmth and comfort round a fireside in the

palace of the High Priest (John XVIII. 18). There is danger lurking in currying favour with the powers that be and being entertained by them. We are warned against the deceitfulness of riches making us unfruitful (Matt. XIII. 22. Luke XXI. 34). The material losses that may be involved in following Jesus may act as a drag and may even result in the rejection of Jesus as happened in the country of the Gergesenes where He was asked to depart out of their coasts because of the loss of their swine (Matt. VIII. 34).

Status. When we contemplate the immensity of the universe and the perfect rhythm with which it works out God's will, what is man ? He is less than dust. In eternity, where there is no time, what is man's span of three score years and ten ? He is but as the flower of the field. Throughout this time and space and beyond, God's plan unfolds itself irrespective of our merits or demerits. We are where we are and what we are, and not by virtue of what we have done, but, through God's grace, as Jesus explains in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt. XX. 1-16). In this setting there is no room for conceit or pride.

The workers are to be humble and not even allow themselves to be addressed as

"Guru" (rabbi) or "Master" (Matt. XXIII. 8, 10); naturally it follows that none can be called "Father" nor styled "Reverend", "Right Reverend" or "Most Reverend" or "His Grace" or "His Holiness" etc. He himself set an example by washing the feet of His disciples (John XIII. 14, 15), and He told them not to aspire to the order of precedence followed in royal courts but that whosoever wishes to be the chiefest should be the servant of all (Mark X. 44), as He Himself came not to be ministered unto but to serve and spend His life in helping others. Therefore, the workers can secure at best an equal status with Jesus as sons of God (John I. 12), and merge their identity in Him (John XIV. 20). There is a general misconception that Jesus claimed a divinity peculiar to Himself. He explains the grounds of His claim based on his performing "the works of my Father" (John X. 33-38). So that anyone else who does the will of the Father will also be a "son of God".

Even popularity for service rendered may not be enjoyed as a compensation. "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you . . . If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John XV. 19-20). This hatred, of course, will be without cause.

It may so happen that the service rendered may be such as to evoke strong public appreciation. Even such may detract from proceeding on the set course with a singleness of purpose and so caution is necessary. After Jesus fed the five thousand, the masses of the people were so moved emotionally that they sought to make Him king by force. But, when He sensed the situation, He withdrew into the solitude which the mountain fastness offered (John VI. 15).

Nevertheless, Jesus did accept loving devotion as in the case of Mary, when she anointed His feet with costly ointment. This was not for His gratification but to allow one who had been through a great deal of tribulation to give vent to her pent up feelings. It was for her good that he accepted the homage (Luke VII. 47, 48). Again, on his triumphal ride into Jerusalem, when the multitudes demonstrated their enthusiasm by shouting "Hosanna in the highest" the Pharisees, who were jealous of His popularity, suggested His rebuking the people for such tumultous behaviour. But He refused to do so as He recognized the human value of such demonstrations of appreciation and affection in advancing the cause (Luke XIX. 39, 40).

Detachment. The workers are to place their duty above even family ties. Those who place father or mother, son or daughter higher than their duty are not worthy to follow Him (Matt. X. 37). When one of His disciples asked for permission first to fulfil his duties to his father and then return to follow Him, He would not consider such a proposition (Matt. VIII. 21, 22). From this it cannot be inferred that we should shake off all family responsibilities. Jesus Himself set an example of filial duty when he provided for His mother while He was dying on the Cross by entrusting her to the care of the disciple whom He loved. (John XIX. 26, 27).

Are we willing to enter such a strait gate and shoulder such a heavy Cross? The one reward will be union with the Father ultimately, with the inheritance of eternal life (Matt. XIX. 29).

The acid test. Whether we are followers of Jesus or not is not a matter that can be decided by a certificate of entry in the parish baptismal register. Jesus has prescribed certain definite tests by which His followers may be recognized. He says, " not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth

the will of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. VII. 21.), and again " By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another " (John XIII. 35). When there is this love and an allegiance to truth such shall hear the voice of Jesus (John VIII. 31). He adds, " Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit " (John XV. 16). " Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." (John XV. 8). True love is bound to lead to action. Need a mother be coerced into attending on the child she bore ? Will not even a starving mother give the last morsel to her child without expecting a return ? Similarly, our love has to be translated into deeds and the quality of our self-denial will declare the intensity of the love. " If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others ? " " If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye ? " (Matt. V. 47. 46). Our service has to be disinterested to exceed the contractual relations of give and take of the general run of worldly people. Such deeds are the fruits of love. " Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them " (Matt. VII. 20).

Function. Jesus conceived His function here below to be "not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." (John VI. 38). And how He went about doing that will of the Father is indicated in the credentials He presents to John the Baptist when the latter enquires who Jesus was. "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. XI. 5); and He charges His disciples also to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out devils" (Matt. X. 8). In the parable of the last judgment, God commends those who come to inherit the kingdom of heaven, and states their claims as being based on their service to the needy. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me food; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison and ye came unto Me." "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matt. XXV. 35, 36, and 40). From these it is clear that the love of the Father has to be transformed into loving service to our neighbours. Jesus says His followers are to be "the salt of the earth" and

" the light of the world ". Salt and light are nothing in themselves apart from their quality through which alone others are aware of them and are benefited thereby. If there be no such benefit derived from these, then their existence is useless. Similarly, if the followers of Jesus do not make their presence felt by the service they render to others they are as good as dust and ashes. Service, then, is the function of all who profess to follow Jesus.

Methodology. How should this function in life be performed? Here again, Jesus sets us His gentle example. Of Him it was said " He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and a smoking flax shall He not quench," (Matt. XII. 19, 20) until He makes religion victorious. His was no church militant attempting to spread the gospel with inquisition, torch and sword. He worked like the leaven that leavens the whole mass, without any hurly-burly, silently by its very nature. His followers are not to sit in judgment over others' actions (Matt. VII. 1) but to shed their light by good work and devoted service (Matt. V. 16), so that others may follow in their train. They are to season others by their own inherent qualities as salt

seasons food and preserves perishable articles (Matt. V. 13).

Though Jesus' ideals were high and uncompromising He expects performance according to the best capacity of each individual. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke XII. 48). Hence, those who are talented have great responsibility laid on them. On the other hand, Jesus commends the poor widow who put into the temple treasury her coppers. He considers that she contributed more than all the rest, for "she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (Mark XII. 44), while the others were giving out of their surplus wealth.

Jesus leads gently those that are weak. In speaking to the people in general, He does not lecture over their heads, but picks words and incidents familiar to them in their everyday life and infuses by means of such simple parables profound ideas, for though they seem to look, yet they do not see and though they listen, yet they do not understand (Matt. XIII. 13).

Such then should be the approach and methods used by those who would follow Jesus. They have to set an example by their life and actions and infuse the love of the Father into the lives of those amongst whom their lot is cast.

The field of work. Thus the love of God has to be demonstrated by a devoted life spent in service of those in need. We ought to heal the sick and teach the unlettered. But, this is not all. As the life of man grows and society assumes more complicated aspects, the sphere of usefulness and service widens. Today, great departments of life are crying out for selfless workers. Children of light are not to be confined to the parish compounds. Every walk of life needs their light and every department needs to be toned up by them right through the great sweep of the social, political and economic world. Let us study in broad outline, a few spheres where such iufluence can be effectively used and then content ourselves with a few detailed instances presenting opportunities of service. Naturally, we restrict ourselves to conditions prevailing in our country.

As we have noticed, Jesus' mission is to shift the emphasis from the external control of life under the Law to self-discipline imposed by the Spirit within us. Such living will naturally and ultimately lead to complete control of our desires and not to indulgence of them. Hence, the present economy of the west based on the cultivation and the gratification of wants is diametrically opposed to the teachings of Jesus.

The charge of Jesus to the rich young ruler, "sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor", is not only applicable to the rich in material wealth but to every one who possesses something that others lack. That ruler happened to be rich in a special way. Silver and gold we may have none, but, such as we have, we are directed to use in the service of those in need of that special possession of ours as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. One may be rich in physical health and strength, in the rare gift of common sense, in possessing social influence, in sagacity, in having natural organizing powers, in inherent commercial ability and industrial foresight, in the enviable capacity to impart knowledge, in learning, in administrative skill, in some applied art—music, painting, sculpture, oratory, or in some professional training—Medicine, Law, etc., in the methods of research and investigation, in technical knowledge relating to agriculture, forestry, geology, pisciculture, etc.. Whatever it be, we have to surrender it all without expecting a return.

In so serving, the worker will neither rust out nor wear out, because such service is twice blessed—like a spring in a well which becomes clearer for the greater quantity of water that is drawn out. This selfless service blesses both

him who gives and him who takes. By the discipline he imposes on himself, he who serves develops his own personality till he becomes perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect. He who is served, not only gets his needs met but he too becomes the better for it. If he be an artisan, who was guided by turning out better work as directed, also develops his faculties, the sense of accuracy, art, method, fine finish, responsibility. A great musician cannot be produced without the discipline of years spent in practice, repeating many times the same lessons on his instrument. During that period he develops his nervous system, synchronizes touch and ears, etc.. Such is the case in all work. All these contribute to man's growth and the expansion of his faculties. There is no such item as drudgery in individual work which needs to be eliminated. Without work man deteriorates. It is through work that man expresses his personality. It is most unfortunate that work has come to be looked upon as a curse from God. The unemployed know by experience that there never was a greater blessing for man than steady work.

Men with sagacity, commonsense and organizing powers, who are wise as serpents and harmless as doves, can devote their special gifts to promoting social harmony, to organizing

the villagers to cooperate among themselves, to settle disputes between them, to arranging for the smooth working of the economic activity of the village and, generally, to looking after their welfare.

The appalling illiteracy in our country is a challenge to all those who have had the benefit of a liberal education. Similarly, the lot of millions of social outcasts is a call to those who have their hearts attuned to the cry of distress.

Is there a better way to serve God for a scientist than to devote all his talents and powers of research in perfecting the methods of production of indigent artisans and thus helping to banish poverty ? Jesus charges Peter to "feed the lambs" as an outcome of the love he professes towards Jesus (John XXI. 15-17). Where is a more effective way of feeding the people than placing them on their feet, and making them capable of helping themselves ? Free gifts of grain are but a crude form of charity, perhaps affording momentary relief, but anything to be lasting needs a life of sacrifice.

The only material return such workers "who are worthy of their food" may expect is to have their minimum requirements of food, clothing and shelter on the basis obtaining

amongst those for whom they work. Freely have we received, freely must we give without hoping for any gain.

Those gifted with specialized knowledge can help with medical relief, aid in agricultural and industrial production, storage, marketing, etc. To a certain extent, self-seeking Mahajans had performed these latter functions on the economic production side until modern capitalism attracted them elsewhere by greater profits, leaving the whole range of cottage and village industries and agriculture as orphans under the present system. Here is an urgent call for hundreds of thousands of trained public workers in all our villages scattered throughout the length and breadth of our land.

On the consumption side, the best help that can be rendered is to limit one's purchases to the articles produced by the indigent artisans and to adjust one's consumption accordingly, thus providing them with a ready market. It may be that to a certain extent, especially in the early stages, such production may fall short of our requirements in finish and appearance, and better and cheaper articles may be available from abroad and from centralized large scale capitalist concerns. Of course, we must do our

best to perfect the methods of village production, but we need not wait till that is done in order to patronize village products. Such difference in price and quality that we have to put up with is part of the cross we may have to bear. But can such privations be properly termed a "cross"? A child may present its mother with a handkerchief hemstitched by its own little fingers, with a few stitches badly made or missing. Will the mother look upon such an article as a "cross"? Would she not rather look upon the labour of love behind it and the effort made and cherish the gift for these reasons? That mother does not measure with material commercial scales, but she covers the whole with a heart of love. Should not this also be the approach of those who are devotees of the God who is love? Every one, rich or poor, can take part in this programme of discriminating consumption as there is hardly anyone who is not a purchaser of some article—food stuffs, baskets, pots, pans and other utensils, tools and simple implements, clothes, leather goods, household requirements such as mats, charpoys, lamps, etc. can all be of local production by artisans who are our poor neighbours. Jesus says, "Give ye them to eat." This mode of limiting our consumption to such articles is one of the most effective

ways of removing the distress of the poor and letting them have what they need.

Those with administrative capacity may enter Government service on the same basis of remuneration as village workers, on a subsistence level of salaries and devote themselves to ameliorating the conditions of life in villages, by the performance of governmental functions conscientiously in the sole interest of the governed and not for securing ambitious careers, or for personal advancement or princely emoluments. A great many departments — forestry, irrigation, power production, communications etc.—need a long range view for their satisfactory planning and execution. These can best be attended to by selfless workers who can well afford to take a detached view of affairs. At present, at every such point, we have exploiters and self-seekers working for their own selfish personal gains to the detriment of the cause of the poor. Hence, there presents itself a most appropriate sphere of activity for every one who would compete to be the greatest servant of all in India. We should all fight oppression of the poor and injustice to the weak, unceasingly with all our health, strength and spirit, not fearing those who are able to kill the body but are helpless against the soul.

A system of living based on self-discipline and self-control is the rock bottom on which political democracy can be built. Jesus brought us the seeds of genuine democracy, which, alas, in the West have fallen among the thorns of the philosophy of multiplication of wants and have been choked by them.

In our country, with the growth of the conception of true democracy, the sphere of activity of the worker is coeval and coextensive with the whole of human life. The people's representatives must lose their own selves, merging themselves completely in the needs of their constituents. Who can do this better than workers who have forsaken the world and its allurements in the service of their motherland? Ultimately, this can be carried into the international field where, today, greed, avarice and ruthless competition hold undisputed sway, plunging the world periodically into rivers of blood. If men who have consecrated their lives on the altar of service can be found to handle these thorny problems in an atmosphere clear of hatred and suspicion, in the spirit of truth and love, there shall then be inaugurated the reign of peace and love in the place of the present one of hatred and turmoil.

Peace that passeth all understanding cannot be ushered in as long as "following"

Jesus is confined to the narrow limits ascribed today to "religion". We have to break down these restrictive barriers. Life, in all its bearings, has to be a continual prayer. Worship of God is not to be confined to Sundays or to be limited to this mountain or that cathedral, to this church or that chapel, or temple or mosque, but is to be open to all activities in every walk of life from the cradle to the grave, and to all mankind. Whosoever opposes such a widening of the field comes of the evil one and cries out demanding "Release unto us Barabbas and crucify Jesus".

Heal the sick. Jesus' conception of His Messianic mission was to call sinners to repentance and to save that which was lost (Matt. IX. 13, XVIII. 11). He offers salvation from sin and so becomes the Saviour of the world. "Those that are whole need not a physician." He said to those whom he healed, "Go and sin no more," thus establishing the connection of sin with disease. Hence those who consecrate themselves to carry on his work should also fight sin wherever it be found and help to deliver the afflicted from the grip of disease. This programme is the preventive form of his charge "Heal the Sick".

Sin. What then is sin? Of God's creatures man is distinguished by his free will.

When man, forgetting his dependent position as a creature, deeming himself the creator, exercises his will to cut across the will of the Father, he commits sin and goes off the rail. This deviation from the divine path results in disease and death—the wages of sin. When he is set back on the original course he is saved. Therefore, the idea of sin is not confined to the transgression of moral and ethical rules only but extends over the whole gamut of nature. When man's life is in tune with the Infinite he obeys God and realizes himself, or else disharmony and discord is caused. Conversely, where there is disharmony of any kind it is symptomatic of sin and disobedience. A clash of man's will with God's purpose caused by the animal in us desiring something that goes against the dictates of the Spirit is *temptation.* When we yield to it we sin. Let us now consider a few examples of such sins in detail in various walks of life in the modern world.

Sex relations. God has placed the sex mechanism in all creatures for the continuation of the species. When this function is used for the flesh it is a sin, whether it takes place within wedlock or outside. Perhaps there will be no difficulty in accepting such a glaring example. Similarly, in other departments of

life also sin is found but often it escapes recognition as such.

Nutrition. For instance, in the matter of food, the grain of rice is made up of the germ, the pericarp, the bran and the starch. For various man-made purposes—commercial and æsthetic—these component parts are separated by polishing the rice. This disturbs nature's provision, hence when the polished rice is consumed without being balanced by other items of diet to replace the constituents lost by polishing, as is done by the poor people, the dire disease of Beriberi appears, with its attendent death, to punish the sinner.

In all animals the instinct of hunger is present to regulate the supply of fuel and to build the body. Man sins when he uses this function to pander to his palate. He over-eats highly seasoned and overcooked processed food, causing most of the ailments human body is heir to, and receives the wages of sin.

Work. All rights carry with them certain duties. Separation of these so as to enjoy the rights to the exclusion of the duties is sin. Creative work has in it the elements of both work and leisure. Exploiters seek to pass on the work to labourers and enjoy the leisure themselves. Poverty, unemployment, famines,

etc. are social diseases caused by our sin of splitting up what God ordained as wholesome work.

Exploitation of nature such as the unrestricted cutting down of trees for timber, without a proper plan of reforestation, leads to floods and soil erosion.

Railway freight rates, devised to export raw materials and to import finished goods, deprive people of their inherent right of work and occupation and cause poverty while they also impoverish the land by the loss of natural manures, as when oil seeds are exported, since this breaks the cycle of nature's economy. Similarly, large towns and cities, where the night soil is wasted, are carbuncles of nature, starving and destroying the fertility of the land.

Finance. The device of money which tempts the farmer to abandon food crops and shift to money crops, like the cultivation of tobacco, in a country like ours where people are dying of starvation, is a sin. When by the temptation of cash gains, eggs, milk, honey and such nourishing food products are snatched away to distant markets without being available to the producers themselves, the medium of exchange is used as an instrument of sin.

State. When the social and political organization is such that it prevents the natural

development of the children of God to their full stature, denying to them freedom and opportunities of education, it becomes an arm of Satan. The State has to be the servant of the people and not their master. The State is created for the people, and not the people for the State. When the creative faculty, bestowed on man for his progress is directed by the State to build engines of destruction, it becomes a veritable abomination of desolation.

The Army, Navy and other destructive forces are occupations conceived by Moloch for his own followers, forming gangs for organized murder. There can be no room in these for the followers of "the Prince of Peace" whose banner is love. Wars should be no more and all swords should be beaten into ploughshares in every land where Jesus reigns.

To attain all these, those who have dedicated themselves thus to serve God in the needs of their neighbours will have to render their devoted service as a chosen generation and a holy group of workers, without fear and seeking no favours. They will turn away from the darkness caused by man-made sophisticated doctrines to the simple teachings of the Nazarene, the carpenter's son, and by their relentless fight against sin shew forth the glory of God who has called them out of darkness

into His marvellous light to be the light of the world, to dispel the darkness of sin and ignorance in national life from all shady corners, and as the salt of the earth they will keep the streams of life pure throughout the land in the midst of vital activities. Behold the fields are white already to harvest, but such labourers as we need are few. May we, therefore, pray fervently that the Lord of the harvest would send forth His workers imbued with His Spirit for the task before them.

VII

COMMANDMENTS OF MEN

Jesus makes a distinction, as to their claims over us, between the commandments of God and the laws laid down by men. The former have to be obeyed always, while the latter, being limited by time and space, are to apply only in so far as they are not in conflict with the spirit of the former and as circumstances permit. (See Matt. XXIII. 23 and Mark. VII 8. 13). As Peter puts it, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts V. 29).

Paul also constantly distinguishes between the rules and suggestions he makes "by permission" as being quite distinct from those he lays down "by commandment of the Lord". (See 1 Cor. VII 6. 12, 25. II Cor. VIII 8. 10. XI. 17). Sometimes the line of demarcation is very thin and so one has to be always on his guard lest by mistake a commandment of man be given precedence over a divine one. The Spirit of Truth, our Comforter and Teacher, is the only reliable Guide at such times. No earthly body, however eminent, can speak with greater authority than this Spirit within us. Neither "His Holiness" nor the Acts of the Houses of Parliament, nor the decisions

of the Privy Council, can make us do things contrary to this supreme Voice within. Hence, so as to be forewarned, it is expedient for us to consider, in this chapter, a few matters on which much misunderstanding exists, especially in regard to the position of women, marital relations and the powers that be, by way of samples. Life is replete with such problems, especially as society gets more and more complex. No earthly conclave can lay down the laws in detail for all times in such matters.

Jesus was content with enunciating the basic principles, which, of course, hold good always and He left further advances and details to be filled in by the Spirit of Truth.

As we have already seen in the third chapter, according to Jesus the sinful thought and desire that precede the act constitute transgressions just as much as the deed consequent on them—anger as much as murder, sensual thought or even lustful look as much as adultery. While opening the gates wide to receive large numbers into the fold, the early churches lowered this standard from the sinful spirit to sin in the flesh itself. Their condition of membership was "that ye abstain from meat offered to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from

fornication" (Acts XV. 29). It did not seem wise to them to lay heavier burdens on the early converts from the Gentiles who were as yet weak spiritually.

Where the modern Churches have gone off the line is in accepting these special concessions made by Peter, Paul and the early Church, to conditions that prevailed two thousand years ago in certain localities and in peculiarly situated congregations, to be final rulings that were to govern all cases everywhere and at all times, instead of looking to Jesus and the Spirit of Truth — the original Fountainhead.

Position of Women. This error in fundamental approach has led to many ludicrous situations under differing climes and circumstances. For instance, in this modern age of women's emancipation when, Miss Maud Royden went into the pulpit of the City Temple in London, there was a furore and some men of orthodoxy rose in horror as it was thought contrary to Paul's direction in the first century to the churches at Corinth and at Ephesus that "it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Cor. XIV. 35) and that women were not to be permitted to teach (1 Tim. II. 11). This attitude was based on the story of the curse of God on Eve for

tempting her husband, Adam, in the Garden of Eden, when she was told that as a consequence of her evil deed she would always be ruled by Adam (Gen. III. 16). With the upholding of such an anachronism what will schools do without women teachers? Today in America, the teaching profession is practically a monopoly of women especially in the earlier grades. Such orthodox persons, who wish to promulgate the superior rights of man, conveniently forget that the same Paul had told the churches of Galatia that "there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus" (Gal. III. 28).

Husbands and wives. In writing to the church at Corinth about marital relations, Paul was dealing with the local prevalent problem of fornication among them, which question was specifically referred to him (I Cor. VII. 1-6) and even then he dealt with the husbands and wives on the same level and, what is more, he definitely states that he was not speaking by commandment. On the other hand, in his letter to the Ephesians V. 23, 24. he did hold that "the husband is the head of the wife." This again, as we have already noticed, has reference to the curse on Eve, and, was, undoubtedly, an outcome of Paul's early training as an orthodox Pharisee.

The same Jewish influence led him to advocate that women must cover their heads as a sign of their subjection to man (I Cor. XI. 5-10). To this day, the churches enjoin this custom on the women of their congregations! And still Paul did recognize the equality of men and women before God (I Cor. XI. 11).

As regards Peter, we must not forget that he was the Apostle detailed out to shepherd the Jewish congregations, amongst whom some wives had accepted the Christian belief while their husbands were still Jewish and *vice versa*. Therefore, when he suggests wives be in subjection to their husbands he is dealing with a peculiar problem confronting him (I Peter III. 1-4). He wants these wives to win over their husbands by their meekness, chastity and quiet spirit. It is the method of "Satyagraha" that he is advocating. There is no inference of inferiority as he recommends a similar course to the believing husbands also (I Peter III. 7). Paul also writes to the Corinthians in the same fashion (I Cor. VII. 14).

Jesus holds the sexes in complete equality; in fact He makes no sex distinctions, for He says, "They are as angels of God in heaven" (Luke XX. 36), i. e. sexless, when they become children of God. Sex differentiation belongs to the animal kingdom — the physical world

— for reproduction and preservation of the species. In man it is the remnant of the instinct of the brute worsened by the possession and misuse of free will. This will be completely erased on being born again.

The Authoritarian Church. In like manner, in matters pertaining to church doctrine, interpretation and government, the churches claim implicit obedience basing their right on the writings of Peter and Paul.

Romans XIII 1-6 is the charter of the powers that be. But the very first qualification implied in Paul's writing that "the powers that be are of God" is often slurred over. All powers are not clothed with the same authority. If they were, regardless of individual allegiance, the Shankaracharyas or the Jagadgurus of the Hindus, the Dalai Lamas of the Buddhists and the Caliph of the Muslims should claim the obedience of the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury! What powers we choose to obey is subject to the spiritual guidance within us.

Paul, himself a Pharisee, rebelled against the Jewish authorities when he saw the light. Later the Apostles broke away from the fundamental Mosaic law of circumcision (Acts XV. 23-29, Gal. V. 6). In spite of this, when circumstances seemed to demand it, Paul

circumcised Timothy (Acts XVI. 3). Paul's appeal to Caesar was to avoid being brought under the clutches of the Jewish religious authorities (Acts XXV. 11).

Jesus is often cited as advocating obedience to authority as represented by the scribes and Pharisees and the passage relied on to support this contention is Matt. XXIII. 2.3. The crucial qualifying clause, "the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses seat", is ignored. Moses was the leader chosen by God and accepted by the people. In a patriarchal community this comes nearest to the natural leaders elected by the people in a modern democracy. Therefore, what Jesus enjoins is obedience to God-sent leaders. Those who claim obedience must first produce reliable credentials of being God-sent representatives of the people.

Besides, the word "observe" in the above passage probably indicates that Jesus was dealing mainly with rites rather than with matters of conscience. We know that He had directed the lepers, when healed, to offer for their cleansing as required by the Mosaic law (Matt. VIII. 4). If this reading is correct, apart from ceremonial observance, no abject obedience to priesthood is enjoined by this passage. He characterized the scribes and Pharisees as "blind guides" (Matt. XXIII.16).

Surely, He cannot advocate people following such guides unquestioningly !

Jesus was neither a fanatic nor a bigot. He showed sympathy and courtesy towards those of other faiths (see Matt. VIII. 10. 11). In practice, Jesus himself never gave Jewish authorities implicit obedience. We have several instances of Jesus setting aside Mosaic law when circumstances demanded it. He again and again broke the laws of the Sabbath, as the Pharisees interpreted it, when the occasion called for such action. He taught that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath (Mark II. 27). In all His actions the overriding consideration was not the Mosaic law but the " will of the Father". Hence the Spirit of Truth within us is the supreme court of appeal and we have to answer to that even at the cost of our lives.

Powers Temporal. In this sphere also, to enforce implicit obedience, Paul's authority is invoked with the support of Peter's too (I Pet. II. 13. 14).

Let us deal with Peter first. His is not a general charge to submit to temporal authority at all costs but it has a specific reference. These two verses are qualified by the very next verse which, according to Dr. Moffatt, forms but a clause of the sentence beginning

with the 13th verse and runs on: "—for it is the will of God that by your honest lives you should silence the ignorant charges of foolish persons;" i. e., just as Jesus submitted to Pilate's jurisdiction to vindicate Truth.

As regards Paul, it is well to recall his antecedents. Like many of us, Indian Christians, who are thoroughly denationalized even to the extent of making English almost our mother tongue, and are taught from childhood to be loyal citizens proud of being British born subjects, Paul too, being by birth a Roman citizen, a proud privilege (Acts XVI. 37. 38) and a coveted distinction held in much honour in those days (Acts XXII. 25. 28), was brought up in a tradition of loyalty to a foreign power. Again, like us he must have been steeped in Western lore and, no doubt, his acquaintance with the Aristotelean doctrine of the subordination of the individual to the State had greatly influenced him. This, of course, is repugnant to Jesus' teaching of the freedom or sovereignty of the individual personality of the child of God. With such a background Paul's authority to guide us in such matters cannot carry much weight. His reasoning is definitely weak in the passage relied on (Rom. XIII.1) where he states, "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are

ordained of Cod." If this sweeping statement were to be accepted without any qualification should we not be "kicking against the pricks" by waging war on Hitler and Mussolini? Who wields greater power than these dictators? Besides, Paul himself on another occasion recognizes the existence of earthly authority other than those from God (See I Cor. 11. 6.8).

To make matters worse, the Authorized Version gives a cross reference to the answer of Jesus to Pilate (John XIX. 11) as though to prop up this case with the supreme authority of Jesus. Here again, we have to bear in mind the context. Pilate haughtily tells his prisoner, Jesus, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Jesus promptly, brings him down a peg or two and puts him in his place by retorting, "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above." That is, Pilate would be like any other man in the street if he were divested of the judicial authority conferred or delegated to him by Cæsar. The word "above" refers naturally to his official superior and not to God. If it had been a reference .to God, Jesus would have used the term, as he usually does, of "My Father" or "Heaven" (see Matt. XXII. 53 and Luke IX. 54).

Again, we are provided with a cross reference, a few verses lower down (Vs. 7), to Jesus saying, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. XXII, 21). To appraise correctly the significance of this passage, once more we have to recall to our mind the circumstances which called forth this statement from Jesus. "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk" (Matt. XXII.15), and sent to Him their Gestapo or C. I. D. men who plotted to trap Him into a seditious statement against Cæsar by asking Him if it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. "But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" (Matt. XXII.18). Thus Jesus was presented with a premeditated, well-conceived dilemma. He skilfully fenced with His inquisitors by referring to the two currencies in which the Roman tribute and the Temple dues had to be paid and so nonplussed them with the above sententious pithy saying under consideration. Is it fair to Jesus to hang a whole system of State philosophy upon an oracular statement extracted from Him under duress?

Even granting we might do so, it is possible logically to prove quite the contrary of the

opinion sought to be established. For we are told, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1. 3). Therefore, if God "had made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is", where does the poor worm of a Cæsar get a look in? All things (including Cæsar himself) belong to God and so have to be rendered to Him and hence Cæsar gets nothing!

The only recorded occasion where Jesus in the course of His brief earthly life was confronted with the question of tax was at Capernahum when enquiries were made if He too would pay the Temple Tax. Though He was of the opinion that only aliens were to be taxed by earthly powers, yet, rather than cause any offence, He directed Peter to pay it (Matt. XVII. 26. 27). We hardly need this incident to provide all our inspiration for formulating the principles of Public Finance needed to run a modern State.

Jesus' whole life was a continuous fight against usurpation and unreasoning authoritarian rule and a heroic attempt to assert the divinity of man and the absolute supremacy of the Spirit of Truth within Him. In this struggle He was nobly followed and supported by an army of early Christian martyrs who

faced the most diabolical tortures rather than let their spiritual personality be subdued by brute force or earthly power. With such undying and unmistakable evidence before us, can we escape or shirk our God-imposed responsibilities by passing it on to an outside authority or power ? We may follow the latter only in so far as their requirements are in perfect alignment with the dictates of our soul. We have to discharge the duties devolving on us primarily to the satisfaction of God. No excuses or substitutes will be accepted. "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things" (Luke XXI. 36). "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. XXIV. 24).

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." . . . "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." (John X. 27. 29).

VIII

A PARABLE — RECAPITULATION AND SUMMARY

Whereunto shall we liken man with the spark of the Divine and the gift of free will? With what comparison shall we compare him?

Man is like a sailing boat on the ocean of life. He is equipped with a compass,—the Spirit of Truth,— to indicate the cardinal points by which to direct his course; he is fitted with a rudder,— the gift of free will,— by means of which to regulate and control his life.

The Spirit of Truth being absolute, and not relative to each individual, is the same in all men, and true for all time. But the steering gear varies. Its position with reference to the hull is dependent on the nautical bearing of the ship — latitude and longitude, the conditions, obstructions and currents in the sea and the direction of the wind.

The compass. Though the compass is on the ship, yet it is not a part of the ship as it works within the great magnetic field of the earth. The ship's hull may pitch and roll on the waves and its bow may shift and change its direction from moment to moment, but

the compass being mounted suitably on an universal swivel point or kept floating on a liquid, maintains its level position irrespective of the motion of the ship, and the needle being under the influence of the magnetism of the earth, remains constantly pointing to the North Pole. Thus being independent of the movements of the boat, it is capable of pointing to the true north, in all weathers and under varying circumstances. Hence, it is made possible to obtain the actual direction of the ship's course and regulate and control its movements accordingly.

Similarly, man, though from the world, is not of it. His spirit being part of the divine is capable of detachment from the things of the earth, gazing always on the eternal purposes of the Creator and forming a part,— however minute,— of God Himself, just as the magnetic needle itself forms part of the huge magnet, — the earth. The Spirit of Truth, being not of the body, is detached from the animal in man and guides him into the ways of God. If man submits himself to it he will bring his own free will into alignment with the will of God.

The Rudder. Unlike the compass, the rudder is firmly attached to the ship and revolves freely on its pivot or hinges and

functions so as to change the course of the ship. Its movements may set the ship on its purposeful and chartered course or may lead it to its destruction, according to whether the rudder is steered in definite relation to the readings indicated by the needle of the compass or not.

When this rudder — the free will of man — is set in full alignment with the will of God, man attains salvation and eternal life by his union with God as his life is regulated, controlled and disciplined according to God's purposes. If the gift of free will is not so controlled, the life of man deviates from the divine course set for him and becomes purposeless like a boat that has lost its rudder and compass and is tossed about by the wind and currents helplessly on an uncharted sea.

The rudder cannot function as the compass. We cannot determine the course of the ship by mere knowledge of the angle the rudder makes with the hull. Two boats may be making for the same port. Their magnetic needles will point in the same direction — due north — while the position of their rudders will differ according to conditions obtaining in the neighbourhood of each boat. Even if two boats be sailing parallel to each other and if they encounter a sandbank ahead, one may round

it to the east of the sandbank and the other to the west and though for a while they may seem to be going in diametrically opposite directions yet they will again come together on the other side of the bank. In the same way, two men or two groups of men may appear to act differently, but this fact in itself is no ground for pronouncing judgment on them. If they are guided by the same Spirit of Truth and regulate their rudders — their will — accordingly, they will ultimately reach the same goal. The apparent contradictions are but adaptations in details called for by varying local circumstances. Rudders of all boats sailing into the same harbour are not all fixed in exactly the same relationship to their respective hulls. In fact, from moment to moment, the angle the rudder makes with the hull will vary. The rudder is not rivetted or screwed on to the hull but has to be moveable to perform its function satisfactorily.

The goal of all religions, as long as the Spirit of Truth pervades their atmosphere, is the same, though for the moment their rudders, — free will and commandments of men — may differ widely. This is no cause for differentiation or condemnation.

The Old Covenant. Before the advent of Jesus, the Jews had mistaken the rudder

—the Mosaic Law—for the compass, and emphasized the position of a fixed rudder in relation to the hull rather than in relation to the needle of the compass. Jesus came to set them right and shew them the relative functions of these indispensable instruments to enable them by the proper use of these to attain life abundant and life everlasting.

The New Covenant. Leaving aside the idea of a permanently fixed rudder—of the literal obedience to the Law and the tradition of the Elders emphasizing the act rather than the spirit,—Jesus pointed to the root cause of evil in the very thought, before even the deed is done. He taught how to read the compass from the position of the needle and direct, regulate and control the course of our lives so as to fulfil the will of the Father.

Prayer. If we may carry the comparison further, the first three sections of "the Lord's Prayer" contemplate the compass—the eternal values that should govern our lives—and the later ones the rudder—the conduct and control of the course of our earthly lives.

Temptation. When the vital connection between the functions of the compass and the rudder is broken, thereby having lost touch with the divine, we fall into temptation

and are tossed about on the billows of desire, ignoring all absolute values. Salvation lies in returning back to the never failing guidance of the compass, so falling in line with the chartered course, and abandoning the previous life of selfish gratification of physical desires.

The Task. Our mission in life is to study the charts of the sea of life, learn of its dangers and be warned ahead of the unseen submerged rocks hidden by the tempting placid waters, to guard against being drawn away by the seemingly easy sailing over shallow seas — over sandbanks, etc.— and to guide our lives as well as those of our neighbours so as to ward off these dangers and set sail steadfastly towards the haven of eternal rest. Those who undertake this responsibility can neither slumber nor sleep.

Man-made Rules. Like the Jews of old, the modern Churches too have made the mistake of clinging to the policy of fixed rudders. Peter, Paul and other Apostles steered the early church through Euroclydons, storms and shoals that were peculiar to their seas. The present churches carefully measure the angle the rudders of the Apostles made to the old hulls and have rivetted their own rudders immoveably to their hulls and are

attempting to set sail dispensing with the compass as being cumbersome. Hence, this catastrophic shipwreck of Europe.

May we take this lesson to heart and assign to the rudder its proper place, restoring to it its mobility and adjustability in relation to the absolute guidance of the compass. The exercise of man's free will in relation to the control and satisfaction of his desires, subject to the discipline of the Spirit of Truth, calls for the everlasting vigilance which Jesus enjoins. Satan will snatch any unguarded moment and divert our course to destruction.

SUGGESTED READING FROM APOSTOLIC WRITINGS ON MATTERS CONSIDERED IN THE BOOK.

On Chapter I, The Epistles to the Romans and Hebrews.

On Chapter II, Ceremonials and Rituals:
Acts XI. 17; XV. 8. 9; Rom. IV. 12; IX. 7., 1 Cor. 1. 17.
Worship and Religion:
Rom. XII. 1. 2; James 1. 27.
Raised in the Spirit:
Rom. VI 4-6; Col. 11. 12. 13; I Peter III.
Contentment:
1 Tim. VI. 6-10.

On Chapter III, *Causes of Conflict:*
James IV 1-4.

On Chapter IV, *Sonship of God:*
Rom. VIII. 14-17, 29, 30; Gal. IV. 6-7; I John II. 28. 29, III. 1-3, 9-11.
Service:
I Cor. IV. 1-5; Heb. VI. 7. 8; James II. 14-26.
I John III. 16-18.

On Chapter V, *Free will*:
I Cor. VI. 12-20. X. 23, 24, II Cor. III. 17; I Peter II. 16.

On Chapter VI, *Self-Control and Discipline:*
Rom. VI. 12-23, VII. 13-25, VIII. 1-13; Gal. V. 16-24, VI. 8.
Heb. XII. 7-13, James III. 1-12; I Peter IV. 1-6, I John II. 15-17.
Trouble: Rom. V. 4. 5.
Detachment: II Cor. VI. 8-10.
Kinds of Service:
Rom. XII. 3-21, I Cor. XII. XIII; I Peter IV. 10-11.
Tactfulness:
Acts XXI. 22-24.
Gentleness:
I Cor. III. 1-3, VIII. 8-13, X. 25-33, Gal. V. 25, VI 3.
Sympathy with other faiths:
Rom. XIV. 1, XV. 7, Eph. IV 6. 7.
Non-Cooperation with offending brethren:
I Cor. V. 9-13.

On Chapter VII, Rules, Etc.
Col. II 20, III. 17

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